

WHEN SQUIRES AND FARMERS THRIVED

A. G. BRADLEY

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**WHEN SQUIRES AND FARMERS
THRIVED**

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

- IN PRAISE OF NORTH WALES
ROUND ABOUT WILTSHIRE
THE ROMANCE OF NORTHUMBERLAND
THE LAMMERMOORS, EAST LOTHIAN AND THE MERSE
THE AVON AND SHAKESPEARE'S COUNTRY
A BOOK OF THE SEVERN
OWEN GLYNDWR AND HIS TIMES
HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS IN NORTH WALES
HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS IN SOUTH WALES
HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS IN ENGLISH LAKES
THE MARCH AND BORDERLAND OF WALES
THE WYE
THE RIVERS AND STREAMS OF ENGLAND
CLEAR WATERS [ANGLING]
OLD GATE OF ENGLAND [WESTERN CINQUE PORTS]
ENGLAND'S OUTPOST [EASTERN CINQUE PORTS]
EXMOOR MEMORIES
ETC. ETC.
-
- LIFE OF WOLFE
LIFE OF GUY CARLETON, LORD DORCHESTER
LIFE OF CAPT. JOHN SMITH AND THE FOUNDING OF VIRGINIA
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"HIGH FORCE" FALLS OF THE TEES

WHEN SQUIRES AND FARMERS THRIVED

BY
A. G. BRADLEY

WITH EIGHTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS



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PREFACE

THE favourable reception accorded to *Exmoor Memories* encouraged me to continue the story amid wider scenes and experiences.

Though the record is mainly personal, it will, I hope, convey incidentally some further pictures of country life in the serene, confident, untroubled days before the collapse of the 'eighties—and the permanent break-up of old conditions. In short, the peaceful atmosphere of Trollope's novels, painted with contemporary knowledge and unerring instinct, as opposed to the later and melancholy tale of the land, told both in fact and fiction by the technically skilled hand of Rider Haggard.

A. G. B.

WEST WATCH

RYE

September, 1927

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WHEN SQUIRES AND FARMERS THRIVED

CHAPTER I

CAMBRIDGE

IN June, 1869, just after the close of term, I went up to Trinity, Cambridge, for the entrance examination, where, together with from one to two hundred candidates for that not very exacting test, I was quartered in college. My rooms being in the old court, the noblest of all college quads., and the season leafy June, my first impressions of Cambridge were all that they should have been. I had emerged a few months before from a long and glorious period on Exmoor, recounted in a former book, a bit anxious as to the inwardness of University examiners in general. We had not bothered about such things up there save that I had for preference read the classical books which, so far as I could learn, were in favour for the Trinity Matriculation. But I had an idea that at Cambridge they worried you not a little with Mathematics, and of these I had done scarcely any since leaving school, and every one knows with what contempt this useful but deadly branch of learning was then treated at Public Schools. I had become a little panicky as Cambridge ceased to be a mere prospect, flickering betimes across the surface of a stream, or vaguely shaping against the moorland horizon that hid the great outer world containing it, and the shadow of the examiner loomed before me. I was thankful that I had had the prescience to read

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for a few weeks with a coach who knew the ways of these people, and discovered that in Mathematics they would surely have pounded me. To this day I do not even know what Algebra is aiming at, though I have passed more than one examination in it. I was much comforted to read lately in Rider Haggard's autobiography that up to the very date of writing it that able man had no notion what Euclid and Algebra were all about. And Haggard at twenty-one was an acting judge in a critical situation in the Transvaal. However, I satisfied the examiners in the only subject I had any anxiety about, and can only suppose they must have been easily satisfied.

Trinity, at a first glance, seemed to me majestic but rather overwhelming. There was certainly nothing cordial and snug about it, as about normal colleges at Oxford, which I knew something of. In going into residence in October, it struck me as splendid but in atmosphere chilly and indefinite. It contained nearly 700 undergraduates even in those days out of a total of about 1700 in the University, nearly 300 of whom were at St. John's. The University was hopelessly top-heavy. Trinity overwhelmed it. Still it was considered a privilege merely to be a member of "the greatest college in England." Oxonians might sniff at Cambridge, as they sometimes did in those days, but you could squash them at once with Trinity. It was unanswerable. At Oxford one college specialised in scholars, another in athletics, a third in aristocrats and expenditure. But Trinity had them all under one roof. At cricket the college in those days could generally have beaten the rest of the University. On the river it had to split up into clubs, at that time three in number, to race on level terms with the other colleges, and even so "First" was always Head of the river. Few men, I imagine, had even a nodding acquaintance with more than a third of their fellow-collegians, or knew the names of half of them. There could be no college feeling, no *esprit de corps*, where there were no rivals. In such a populous, split-up society there was no common bond *but* college that in others, both at Oxford and Cambridge,

makes for a pleasant corporate feeling on that ground alone in after life. The mere fact of having been at college together for three years meant nothing at all to Trinity men as such.

On the other hand, there was the privilege of a recognized condescension towards all the other colleges, toleration for three or four and contempt for the rest as "small colleges" outside the pale. The latter, at any rate, reciprocated in kind. I have heard them in after life reveal their former hatred for Trinity. Perhaps it still exists, as a youth from Peterhouse told me the other day he didn't think much of it! Furthermore it must be noted that Trinity was mainly made up of men from the eight or ten then leading schools, Eton, Harrow and Rugby greatly predominating. My own schoolfellows who swarmed at Oxford were comparatively scarce at Cambridge, about thirty in all, I think. The Hall, Caius and Jesus, and perhaps Corpus, were probably half from the Public Schools. King's, then only recently thrown open, still mostly consisted of Eton Collegers and was small. The rest, though St. John's had a considerable Public School group, were mainly filled from the Grammar Schools. It should be remembered, however, that the local Grammar Schools then absorbed numbers of the type which later on went to the Public Schools. Oxonians in those days always spoke with contempt of the Cambridge "small colleges," though they seldom knew enough to draw nice distinctions such as a Trinity man would have done, though even these last might have been capricious. But it was not paucity of numbers only that counted, for some distinguished Oxford colleges such as Corpus were hardly, if at all, larger. But I fancy the Cambridge dons were slack and no new blood from outside was introduced, which prejudiced the authorities at the Public Schools against them.

Nothing, however, could have been slacker as regards the average undergraduate than Trinity. For another privilege of being a member of "the greatest college in England" was that unless a freshman was a scholar of that illustrious Foundation, or marked for high honours, the dons did not bother about him at all. For a year and a half after Matricu-

lation, at any rate, he rarely or never spoke to one in a private way, except a single perfunctory breakfast in his tutor's rooms which bored both parties stiff, or again if summoned for some misdemeanour. There were three tutors at Trinity, each of whom was supposed to shepherd about two hundred men, known as Sides. Mine was a quite attractive, scholarly gentleman, with whom I breakfasted twice. He lectured his forty to fifty freshmen on Classics every morning, till they dwindled away. I believe attendance was compulsory. But as the company began to realize that they were back in the fifth form at school, they gradually abandoned it and, if memory serves me, without protest. The process was precisely the same, without the schoolboy stimulants of compulsion and competition. The books were the ordinary Latin and Greek subjects for the "Little-Go," which then came a year and a half after Matriculation and was scarcely more difficult, the only fence to be negotiated before proceeding to the Mathematical, Classical or History Tripos. So, for the average undergraduate, serious life did not begin till his fifth term.

Meantime he led a care-free existence, wholly detached from tutorial worries or interests, save a simple college examination in the summer, in which even failure went for nothing. You were never asked either by your college or the University to do a piece of Latin prose, much less English composition, theme or essay, which annoyed me, as they were my strong suits. Nor were the authorities satisfied with assuring themselves, as they thought, that you had mastered Euclid and Algebra before you went on to the humarer studies. So much might be conceded to academic conventions. But enough of the Mathematical obsession of Cambridge still remained in those days to pester the aspirant to Classical or History Honours with papers on Trigonometry and Mechanics, tacked on to his ordinary Little-Go examination. Why in the name of common sense a Classical or Historical student should have had his brains taxed and his time wasted in mastering the elementary mysteries of a surveyor or an engineer I never could imagine. After all

this was as nothing to the tyranny which the Mathematical Tripos had exercised over preceding generations, when the most brilliant Classic could not proceed to a degree at all till he had wasted weeks and months of his three years in struggling with an uncongenial subject and facing the Mathematical Tripos. But Cambridge had then been more frankly a mathematical University. By my time it had almost shaken off this reputation and the Classical Tripos stood, I think, as high with the Public Schools as the Final Schools at Oxford. Trinity, like the sources whence it was chiefly nourished, was distinctly classical with its Law and History alternatives. It was just a little inclined to despise Mathematics as a pursuit mete only for Johnians and "smugs." I had been brought up in an atmosphere intensely Oxonian in which both the learned and the unlearned held the same view, a most comforting attitude for those who had no aptitude or liking for figures and hieroglyphics. So it seemed preposterous that one could not take a degree in Classics or History without being worried on the way by Trigonometry and Mechanics. No doubt the test was elementary, which only makes for its greater absurdity. The lectures to first-year men were a farce. Each "side" at Trinity was lectured to by its tutor at ten o'clock. Potential Senior Classics and men who had come up to hunt and frolic all shared this inspiring hour. The alphabetical seating brought me next to the first favourite and ultimate winner in the Classical Tripos when the time came. He was an old schoolfellow and of the same house at Marlborough; so we were old friends as it were. But his brilliancy had been noised abroad beforehand. The Universities had in a manner fought for him. His father, an Irish bishop and ex-Provost of Trinity, Dublin, had set forth claims for his own Alma Mater, a prospect which almost shocked my friend's headmaster, an intense Oxonian. The struggle ended in a curious compromise on Cambridge, which though disappointing to his Oxonian chief, was after all a great escape, so he thought, for his brilliant pupil. On the other side of him sat a sporting baronet who had probably been crammed through his

Matriculation at the second shot. It was a wonderful mixed team to be collected under the same teacher ! I can still see the latter's handsome, bored face as he politely requested this gentleman or that to construe a paragraph from Livy or Herodotus, for I think this is all the lecture amounted to and the subjects were those of the Little-Go and that four terms ahead !

Fancy an embryo Senior Classic having to sit through this ! It was pure waste of time even to the ex-fifth form boy. I well remember the first time my accomplished neighbour was asked by the lecturer with a brightening expression to oblige the company, his handsome face and charming voice, with a faint touch of Irish accent in it, giving utterance in fluent, easy English to the Greek text. It brightened up even that bored company. It was rather too bad of the tutor to call next upon the sporting baronet, even if propinquity had suggested it. This prudent young gentleman, however, had a translation open on his knee against emergencies. "Thank you, Sir Timothy," said the lecturer when he had glibly reeled off quite a goodly portion. "Now you have given us Mr. Bohn's version, perhaps you will kindly favour us with your own." Sir Timothy had not one of his own, but that did not matter in the least. Nothing mattered in that strange lecture-room and nothing was to be gleaned. There was a second hour, I remember, in which the same company were entertained by a Mathematical tutor. Here, too, the proceedings were precisely as those at school, and even the subjects, Euclid and Algebra, upon much the same level. At least, I believe so. I did not pay much attention to the blackboard on which the lecturer was writing out problems which anybody who chose could do, for paper and pens were there for the purpose. Most men, I think, did not choose, but read a book. I read, some sort of History, I fancy. I regarded the distasteful subject in hand as mete only for a week or two of cramming before an exam., and the next one was in the following December year ! Everyone, I think, by slow degrees and, so far as I remember without much remonstrance, abandoned these

farcical performances, for I cannot recall them in my second term. After this I did nothing. There was nothing to be done till after the Little-Go, which demanded no serious preparation. My intention, though rather vague, was the History Tripos. I was fond of History and had read Macaulay ardently, but in truth was not much of a reader in those days, though a sense of the past, if as yet but faintly developed, was planted within me and I did browse a little in the college or the Union library on some of the quaint old books lurking therein. No tutor enquired after my intentions. I never met a Trinity don in the normal way. Still it was a great thing to be at the "first college in England." Even that intense Oxonian, my father, said it was, so did another of the same convinced persuasion, my old House master at school. But the great men of our great college obviously thought it was a sufficient honour to be a humble member of their illustrious Foundation and did not bother about one, unless some undue evasion of chapel or Hall stirred them to reproof or even a gateing.

It is easy to say I should have found out what the subjects for the History Tripos of three years hence were likely to be, sported my oak and started to read them. But three years then seemed a lifetime. The Little-Go seemed far enough away, but that did not need any reading, except the infernal Mechanics and Trigonometry tacked on it for the Honours men. This weighed on my hopelessly unmathematical soul, but judging from my methods of tackling the kindred branches, I estimated that a fortnight's hard cramming on the eve of the event would see me through. Then there was *Paley's Evidences of Christianity*, in which every one had to pass. But some thoughtful crammer had published, for sixpence, a large folding card of doggerel and rather irreverent rhymes. By committing these to heart after a cursory reading of a condensed edition of Paley I was assured you could satisfy the examiners. This I found to be correct, the effort occupying about a day and a couple of late nights. The first question of the Paley paper was popularly supposed always to be the same, and ran, "What is the prejudication

which Paley would resist?" Just imagine asking a boy such a question as that! Luckily the answer was snuggly embodied in a "Limerick" which the wily candidate had ready for the occasion.

Once I attended with a crowd of other undergraduates an evening affair known and detested as a "Perpendicular" at the Master's lodge. That luminary was the pompous and frigid gentleman who a familiar tradition credits with refusing a bishopric on the plea that there were lots of bishops but only one Master of Trinity. For his biting tongue it was said of him, "He casteth forth his ice like morsels, who is able to abide his frost." And he looked the part in chapel in his skull-cap. But these gems were reserved, I fancy, for the Fellows and his co-dignitaries. Certainly the undergraduates were not worried by them. I cannot help thinking that in a humbler and less crowded Foundation a fairly well disposed youth would have found the academic atmosphere less chilly and got some sort of encouragement and shepherding. So, there being nothing to do and no exams. to face worth mentioning till a vague, remote-seeming Tripos, I pursued the normal life of an undergraduate who was neither rowdy nor studious. Trinity was rather a wilderness socially. Freshmen from the larger schools walked about together with their old schoolfellows arm-in-arm after the custom of that day, and carefully dressed as was also the habit. Such herding, of course, was bad, but what could they do? Nobody called on freshmen except for private reasons, and it took some time for these knots to dissolve and by mixing with others to get the full benefit of University life. For myself I had sufficient ready-made acquaintances among the freshmen, for though my own school was then mainly Oxonian, I had Rugby connections which tapped that fuller source at Trinity. There was nothing to do out of doors in the winter but row, so I joined the First Trinity boat club, was duly tubbed and eventually found my way to the bow seat in a modest eight-oar, and in the Lent races rowed bow of one of the lower First Trinity eights. I have cause to remember this, as Peterhouse over-

lapped us almost from the start to the finish every day of the week's racing, and to the very last we only evaded them by feet or inches.

Though the bump was of small importance, it was such a prolonged and sensational struggle that we had crowds running with us on the last two occasions. We were frightfully done up, being mostly freshmen, though we thought ourselves heroes, and came out of training with due celebrations. A few days afterwards I was fortunate enough to row bow in the winning boat of the First Trinity fours out of nine competing boats. J. B. Close, of the University eight, one of the famous brothers of that period, stroked us. Though you might be something of a passenger in a successful eight, in a four-oar you had to do your bit, and I was quite pleased to feel I did so. Owing to the limited width of the noble Cam, compelling time races, we had to race three times in succession, I remember, over the course. Cambridge won the Boat Race that year after ten consecutive defeats, the immortal Goldie of Eton and Lady Margaret stroking it to victory. I can still see that eight sitting in their boat and put the names to their faces. There was tremendous excitement: even Oxford was glad. The Cam had just been dredged, for some attributed the continuous defeats of its boat to the shallow water. An Oxonian, Morrison, had coached the crew, a little humiliating it seemed at the time, but still Goldie carried on the winning record. I never took part in another boat race till five years later in America, when I rowed bow in an English four consisting of two old Etonians and two old First Trinity men, against an American crew on the James river, sitting on sliding seats, then recently invented, for the first time.

Lorna Doone had then just come out, and it was during this Easter vacation while hunting on Exmoor with the Rector of Windycombe, as related in my former book, that we ran into the very first pioneers of that tourist stream to the Doone valley which was steadily to swell for nearly sixty years into its present volume. Bishop Ridding, then Headmaster of Winchester, with a colleague, book in hand,

striding over Brendon Common and demanding of our company, to their perplexity, the way to the Doone valley, was possibly on that April morning the very first of that pilgrim host.

With the May term came cricket, a much more serious affair to me than boating, and a vastly superior art, as I had the hardihood to think. Trinity had the fine ground it still possesses. Only three other colleges, St. John's, Jesus and Corpus, had anything of the kind. The rest played cricket huddled together on Parker's Piece. Only one match at a time was possible on our ground, and that was always against some other college, club, or minor county. In a body of, say, six hundred and fifty men, mostly from Public Schools, it may be imagined what sort of a chance the average cricketer had without some kind of credentials. Even then there were great numbers of Trinity men who, though useful and keen cricketers, never touched a bat at Cambridge. For there were none of the outside clubs that, I believe, developed later.

Eton and Harrow and Rugby had then the chief say in Cambridge, and particularly in Trinity cricket. There was not a Wykehamist as cricketer of any kind in Cambridge at that particular moment. The days had not come when Uppingham and Repton were for a space to take a leading hand in it. The former, though just becoming well known, was only emerging from a smallish Grammar School ; the latter was a good deal more than that, though I blush to say I had never even heard of it till I went to Cambridge. How vastly these things have changed only those who knew the 'sixties could realize. What is St. Paul's (School) ? I remember being quite seriously asked at a wine party. Personally I had not a notion, and then somebody said, "Oh, you look up a passage somewhere in the city and see a lot of little devils running about in a yard. That's it." Perhaps they knew better at Oxford, and doubtless our own dons did. I am sure none of us had heard of Merchant Taylors, unless peradventure we had noticed that these two were included in the nine old Foundations in the

Public School Commission. But that would not have made any difference. Day schools that had no athletic existence at all and were sparsely represented at the Universities or in ordinary social life about the country! How should we know anything about them, whatever label a Royal Commission might put on them? Charterhouse was then fading away in its old cramped quarters in Smithfield. I played cricket myself against them in the Long Vacation of 1870, on their diminutive ground, where the ball bounded against the encircling walls while their team naturally enough was below the Public School standard.

But to return to the subject in hand. I came up with no cricket credentials, having left school two years previously, so did not, of course, play in the Freshmen's match on Fenners. But that very fixture eased the pressure at Trinity for a match on the same date. By the good offices of some unknown benefactor I was chosen to play for the college. By a rare piece of good fortune I made a useful not out score, in both innings, and played in practically every match for the rest of the term, and two or three times for the Quidnuncs, who sometimes went away for a country match and were so painfully exclusive a body that there were seldom eleven members available in Cambridge to display its colours on the field. Several even of the University eleven were not then members, a most unusual thing and provocative of a good deal of comment, so it was imperative to go outside. The only tie-match I ever took part in was when playing for this distinguished club on the Trinity ground against an eleven of Yardley's, the crack bat of Cambridge at that time and, indeed, next to W. G. Grace of all English amateurs, and we had the best University bowlers against us. With nine wickets down and 86 runs to tie, Harrison Ward, of Jesus and the 'Varsity eleven, and I put on 85, with extras, for the last wicket, but one run short of our opponents' 203 total. When I was hit hard in the face by Cobden, a very fast, bumpy bowler, the hero of the three-run victory by Cambridge at Lord's a month later. I was half-stunned and rather badly hurt, and after a single from

Ward at the other end staggered across to be dismissed by the first straight ball from the medium-paced 'Varsity bowler, A. A. Bourne. The match is printed in full, with others, in the Cambridge Calendar for 1870. In the same volume is a table of averages ; mine, I note, is given as 26, but including some matches not printed in the University Calendar and so not reckoned it was nearer 40, which for those days of lower scores was rather more than creditable.

Now in those days it was customary for an All-England XI of professionals, or its equivalent, to travel about England playing twenty-twos or eighteens of various localities. We had been about to play an eighteen of Trinity *v.* an England XI that term on our ground, but the latter failed us most incontinently at the last moment, much to my disappointment. But fortunately, in this my last cricket season for about fifteen years, I had an opportunity of meeting the two great professional bowlers of that day with a twenty-two *v.* a United South XI at Lord Craven's then beautiful ground at Ashdown Park, between Newbury and Oxford. These matches used to be great events. Provincials, in the South, at any rate, rarely saw the famous players. Special trains were run and all the vehicles in the district were in requisition, while Spiers & Pond with big marquees did the catering. Willshire, the great left-hand fast bowler of that day, and Southerton, the slow round-arm, his complement in fame, were against us. If memory serves me, our side made about 90 in each innings and our opponents rather less. We had Belcher, the Oxford fast bowler of that year, and two or three second-class professionals. Twenty-two in the field is not conducive to run-getting, nor even in their turn at the wickets when confronted by names of dread.

It was a plumb but rather dead wicket, I remember, and lovely weather, though it was the last days of September, 1870. Football had not then encroached on the cricket season and eliminated both ends of it, for there was no proletarian football to encroach. I went in after some five or six of my friends, quite good bats, had failed to do themselves justice, and with all the respect their failures and the prestige of the

two great bowlers called for, could only hope for the best. I do not know what possessed me, but I played Willshire and Southerton, the two best bowlers in England, for an hour and a half, while the remaining fifteen or so of the side went backwards and forwards with but brief intervals of resistance, without the faintest sense of any difficulty or giving the vestige of a chance, and carried out my bat for 30. The strange thing was that the next day and in the second innings I went on for another half hour doing precisely the same thing with the same ease, feeling confident of going through the innings again, when I was idiotically run out. Though nearly sixty years ago to this day, if I look through old cricket books with pictures of Willshire and Southerton with the linen collars, coloured shirts and snake-clasped belts of those days, and read minute descriptions of their bowling, I feel that I need no such reminder. For I can visualize the tall, fast bowler and the "stocky" slow bowler coming up to the crease with the short run of old days as if it were yesterday, and see again the flight, the pace, the break of the balls over which, to my delight and surprise, I acquired such an uncanny, and to myself then, an almost-unaccountable mastery. For if it gave me a little conceit of myself it was properly knocked out in the following year, when in a similar contest, on the fiery, bumpy ground in Savernake Forest, Allan Hill, the new fast bowler, shattered my stumps with deplorable celerity in both innings.

Having rambled so far into cricket gossip, I will go further, for I saw some rather curious things happen in that glorious and brilliant summer of 1870. As, for instance, at the annual match between Rugby and Marlborough, played at the latter place instead of Lord's for the only time in the seventy years of its history. Going in for their second innings, Rugby had only about 25 runs to make to win. But so fast did R. E. Prothero, the present Lord Ernle, rattle the wickets down that five good men were out for ten or a dozen runs. The excitement was tense. The Rugby "tail" were sitting wan and pale in their new light-blue shirts and caps with pads already on. Their captain, however, a fine

bat without nerves, went out and saved them. Now the match ground at Marlborough is terraced into a long slope, involving thereby a high steepish bank on the lower side. In the first innings of this same match a Rugby player made a fine but skied hit to long leg, where the Marlborough captain, Mr. Belfield Woollcombe, was standing. The ball was dropping on the very rim of the bank and the fieldsman, running backwards, brought off a magnificent catch but, ball in hand, tumbled down the slope within sight, fortunately, of several bystanders. The achievement was invisible to the batsmen, who went on running cheerfully till Woollcombe, appearing in leisurely fashion from below, gave the signal and the umpire informed the elated batsman, to his amazement, that he was out. Thirty years later I was golfing with a stranger near London who happened to mention that next day he was going to see the Rugby and Marlborough match at Lord's, and further that he lived in the North and had not seen the match since he played in it for Rugby at Marlborough in 1870, "when," said he, "I hit a ball out of sight to leg and had run about five when I was told I was out; very mysterious I have always thought it." "Well, I saw that catch," said I, "and will introduce you to-morrow to the man who caught you," and I did.

It was on September 28th of the previous summer, 1869, that W. G. Grace, already the champion bat of England, came down to Marlborough with an eleven against the boys. The story is told so often in the press, and elsewhere, though generally told wrong, I almost hesitate to repeat it. But as I was there, there is at any rate nothing second-hand in the relation. The boys had naturally been wondering whether they would ever get the champion out. But to the amazement of all, though no doubt the disappointment of many spectators, Grace's stumps were sent flying almost before he had scored by Arthur Kemp, a Devonshire boy, who, though exceeding short of stature, did bowl, I remember, a tremendous pace. I think it must have been the surprise of the ball coming so fast from so small a bowler that upset W.G. But the point of the story remains. The late Canon

Henry Bell, a well-known cricketer in his day, was in with Grace at the time and related how the latter, who knew the ground quite well, had just before made a bet that he would both make a century and hit a ball to drop in Sun Lane, a pretty good achievement! It was the custom then for the two teams to dine together in college in the evening, a function automatically terminated by the chapel bell. The visitors often accompanied the boys to this evening service before dispersing to their quarters, for the music was extremely good. By a singular coincidence the hymn that night, or set according to routine on the first of the week, contained the pregnant lines :

The scanty triumphs Grace hath won,
The broken vow . . .

The first line was quite enough for the congregation. They, of course, knew nothing of the Sun Lane bet till afterwards Canon Bell repeated the full story in the *Spectator* just before his death a few years ago. As a boy of sixteen at school three years before I had once played on the same side with the full trio of Graces, the Doctor, G. F. and W. G. They had brought over an eleven against the school at the end of the season, but turning up one short, I was deputed to fill the gap. Having played for the school in the preceding match and being properly, for a failure to score, left out for this one, I was most anxious to make runs. To my disgust, after making a dozen and feeling comfortable, the "Doctor" ran me out most flagrantly. This (1867) was, I think, the year that W. G. first established his supremacy, though still only a boy of 18 or 19, and I well remember his long, slight figure. Fred, who died from damp sheets on a cricket tour, was then much the neatest in build and smartest looking of the three, the Doctor, the eldest brother, being shorter. The latter came to Marlborough in those early days several times. I can see him now bowling his lobs, his punishing but rather rustic batting, and astonishing activity in the field. The wags used to declare that he could field his own bowling at square leg ! while Mr. Rutter

in his recent *Cricket Memories* declares that he would dash in from point and literally pick the ball off the player's bat.

This same summer of 1870 is further associated in my mind with two cricketing curiosities that I imagine to be unique of their respective types. Now the Marlborough ground before the pernicious modern craze for artificial boundaries, on account of a virtually illimitable and gentle downward slope from one side, was notable for big hits. R. A. H. Mitchell, the great Eton and Oxford bat, held the record on it in my school days with a niner. But this summer of 1870 I was playing myself against the school when one of our side, a lusty gentleman farmer of the neighbourhood, made a square leg hit for which his exhausted partner, falling in mid-career, was run out trying to complete the eleventh run ! And nimble boys used to the ground, be it remembered, were after the ball. About the same time, too, news filtered through from Devonshire that the Rev. J. F. Scobell,¹ formerly well-known as a boy at Marlborough and later as playing for Oxford, had hit 44 runs off a single over. Knowing the noble county of Devon pretty well, I took it for granted that the feat had been performed at some village match, played on the summit of one of its thousand hills, and if sensational in the hearing was at least readily explicable. Not at all ! It was on the garrison ground at Plymouth, and remained an easy record till artificial boundaries came to penalise big hits, flatter little taps and snicks with fours, and generally favour the batsmen.

I contrived to spend the month of August this same summer on Dartmoor. Three Oxford friends, old school-fellows of mine and West-countrymen, were going there to read, so they said, and asked me to join them. I thought perhaps I might do a little History on Dartmoor, as I had read so much in earlier days on Exmoor ! At Trinity it seemed impossible to read anything, particularly as nobody seemed to care tuppence whether one did or not. Moreover, I was painfully sensitive to environment and a set of

¹ A great hitter but did not actually play against Cambridge, possibly because there were already five Marlburians in that Oxford XI.

ground-floor rooms facing north in the dreadful new buildings known as Whewells Court would have quenched all desire for solitude, whether studious or otherwise. With rooms over the noble gateway of Trinity looking into the great court, such as my friend the future Senior Classic occupied, it might have been different. I had been about Dartmoor a little from Chagford, as a boy. But our headquarters now were at the small village of Holne, on the other edge of the moor, consisting of an old church, the vicarage where Charles Kingsley was born, a few cottages and an inn. The last, our quarters for the time, was the discovery of one of our party who lived in the neighbourhood.

It was an experiment, but proved a complete success, possessing a most respectable landlord, with a capable wife and two pretty daughters, whose looks brought them husbands later on from a more exalted sphere. They had never catered for gentlefolk, nor indeed for any regular guests before. But Mrs. R—— might have been a cook in the Royal Family, and an upstairs sitting-room over the porch was pronounced wholly adapted to our simple wants, particularly for reading in, as there was a long table suggestive of village feasts running down the centre. But we did not read, neither there nor anywhere, not a word, though two of our number were scholars of their college with "Greats" just ahead of them. We were out all day, fishing the Dart or walking the hills, while at night we found the village parliament in the bar altogether too seductive. There were about six members of it. The rustic tailor, the cobbler, the blacksmith, the clerk, and one or two others, in short the "leaders of village thought," representatives of a sequestered hamlet in this year of grace and the Franco-Prussian war, 1870; for the last flamed out just as we went on to the moor.

There were no tourists on Dartmoor, on that side of it, at any rate, in those days. Though covering a lot of country, throughout a whole month of weeks, we never so much as set eyes on a single stranger. A London daily paper reaching us the next morning brought the news into these wilds of the

steady progress of the Prussian arms. I think we fairly reflected the feeling of our kind in being, if anything, slightly pro-Prussian. I had grown up like the rest of my generation with a feeling towards the French as our hereditary, in fact, our only natural enemies, while the Prussians and Germans generally seemed to be outside any cause for hostility, which after all was then but a simple fact. Most of my contemporaries only knew them through their sisters' German governesses, who were mostly worthy enough souls, and if the domestic school-rooms grumbled at their thoroughness, the mammas did not. The village, however, was very little interested in the war as it did not, so they thought, concern them. Having been in Paris and, as related in my Exmoor book, arrested there as a conspirator against the life of Napoleon the Third for the spike in the end of my fishing-rod, which I still had by me, I naturally felt a little more in touch with the seat of war than my three companions who had never been abroad, and from their intense devotion to the sports and pastimes of Britain I am quite sure they had never wanted to.

One of them, a Wiltshire man and incidentally the best and most stylish wicket-keeper in all the Western counties, but with no fancy for fly-fishing or for scenery, would never have been inveigled up on to the top of Dartmoor by his more scholarly fellow-collegians but for his intimacy with them and myself. Indeed, as it was we could not keep him long away from cricket and civilization. As a matter of fact he and I went down during this month to play in a match for Totnes, and slept at Dartington Hall, whose owners had always been very kind to me. Every one in those parts knows that there is a haunted chamber in that beautiful old Tudor house, known as the Countess' room, though it was then always in use as one of the spare rooms. Its dramatic story I have no space for here. I was quite familiar with it, but my companion, as unimaginative a man as I ever knew in my life, was simply terrified when he discovered, only on going to bed and through my brutal candour, that he was in *it*. He spent a night of terror, he declared, under

the bedclothes, which accounted perhaps for his failure with the bat next day, though he electrified the locals with his wicket-keeping. But in the meantime he was rapidly qualifying as the best exponent of the Wiltshire dialect in that county, while our Devonian friend was not only equally good at his own vernacular but had something like a mania for it through much of his life, airing it in all places and at all seasons, often to the utter bewilderment of his company.

It was a fine summer, as I have said, and on most nights when we ought to have been reading we sat in the porch or the bar with these same village Solons, all men of character, cramped and fashioned by the circumstances of their illiteracy and complete isolation, into strange and whimsical ways. The beer we, of course, provided ensured punctuality in attendance and also let loose their tongues not merely upon moorland stories and legends but to whimsical and fantastic views of the outer world, as then visioned by these unlettered denizens of the wild. They had never mixed on such terms with people of our sort before, and the memory of those many evenings I am sure must have lasted them their lives. Our Wiltshireman talked old Wiltshire to them, that broadest and quaintest of South Saxon dialects, and they shouted with laughter that any human being could hold such outlandish speech, while our Devonian was only too delighted to cultivate his particular hobby to such advantage. One of the party, a cobbler, was locally known as the "Politikan," from his fancy for politics, another was "the poet," a tailor, who included with his bills for patching or mending doggerel lines of a more or less personal nature. The month flew by all too quickly and we scattered into a world now all agog with the advance of the Prussians towards Paris. But nothing whatever had been done in the matter of either "Greats" or "Mods" or that elusive History Tripos of mine. Personally I believed I was better employed, and in truth I rather think I was. My parents had just returned from Switzerland. Wars did not seem to make much difference in those days. They travelled

peacefully back along the Franco-German frontier and their train was surrounded at one stopping-place by French fugitives and many wounded from an adjacent battlefield. I still have all the details in my mother's journal. They had been at the theatre, too, in Paris on the night after war was declared and sat through the orgy of flag-waving and singing provoked by it.

Our Devonian friend in the meantime was so enamoured of this rustic Elysium he had discovered that his friends and their friends never allowed its rooms to be empty in summer again. For years to come its discoverer, who as well as a good Classical scholar was a keen sportsman, established himself there with guns and dogs, rods and books, and a Crown licence for shooting blackgame, etc., on Dartmoor for weeks together. His father was a parson of weight and attainments, and his uncle the Squire—such a frequent and comfortable combination in those good old days!—of a parish in the Kingsbridge country. They had a gardener at their delightful and capacious Rectory who was the pride of his young master's life. He was supposed to talk the archaic dialect in its most pristine purity. Guests from "up-country" were taken out to hear him converse, and there was no difficulty about that, as he was a great and whimsical conversationalist. For my part I could understand him, as I had been used to the lingo from boyhood and was moreover rather keen myself even then on dialects. But even so I could appreciate his "preciousness" and the unbroken front he must have presented to a stranger. There was a story in the family of a certain visitor from a far county who, on arriving in the dogcart under William's auspices from the station ten miles away, was asked the usual question as to the driver's loquacity. The guest replied that he understood nothing of it, but that there was one phrase repeated so often that he could reproduce the sound of it, which to his unsophisticated ear represented *Urrskinsrazzer*. Upon this it was explained that William was merely harping on the obvious fact that the "air was as keen as a razor!" But one cannot spell rustic dialect to much purpose. It is

the pronunciation, the intonation, which count, particularly in South-country speech.

It was in 1910 I saw Holne again, after forty years. The old inn was externally much as ever, though furbished up a bit inside. Though only June, the landlord, a new one, of course, had already two couples there, his limit, and also a visitors' book which went back nearly to our day. I told him how the house had got its first start and asked to be allowed to inscribe our four names in the beginning of the book as in a sense the founders of its prosperity. Which I did, feeling a little melancholy over the task, as only one survived.

CHAPTER II

CAMBRIDGE AND CAMBRIDGESHIRE

IT will be readily understood that I have little to say about the Trinity dons of my day. Beyond a visit from the future Bishop Lightfoot who, on one occasion, interrupted the perhaps too hilarious birthday supper of a friend on my staircase, my tutor with whom I breakfasted twice, and the junior Dean, of chilly and repellent demeanour, with whom occasional absence from hall or chapel brought me in contact, I encountered none of them. I daresay this was all in order—at Trinity. I am neither complaining—for I have no cause to, as things turned out,—nor criticising. Such an illustrious college must surely have ordered its ways for the best, so far as its huge numbers allowed it to order them. Moreover, with only half the allotted period of residence to my credit, I am conscious that my experience had limitations. But it so happens that a present-day friend and neighbour of mine who went up to Trinity from Harrow in 1873 and passed out with modest honours in the Law and History Tripos, tells me that in his three years he saw neither more nor less of the Trinity dons than I had done, that he did his reading with a coach in the town, and when the reading was over used to dance with his daughters! Otherwise he breakfasted once a year to their mutual boredom with his tutor, and attended one or two still more irksome “Perpendiculars” at the Master’s lodge. This was long before the days of Dr. Butler, an ideal Master, I am sure, whom I often met when I was a boy in the Isle of Wight and occasionally at my father’s house in his later Trinity days. But of other Cambridge celebrities

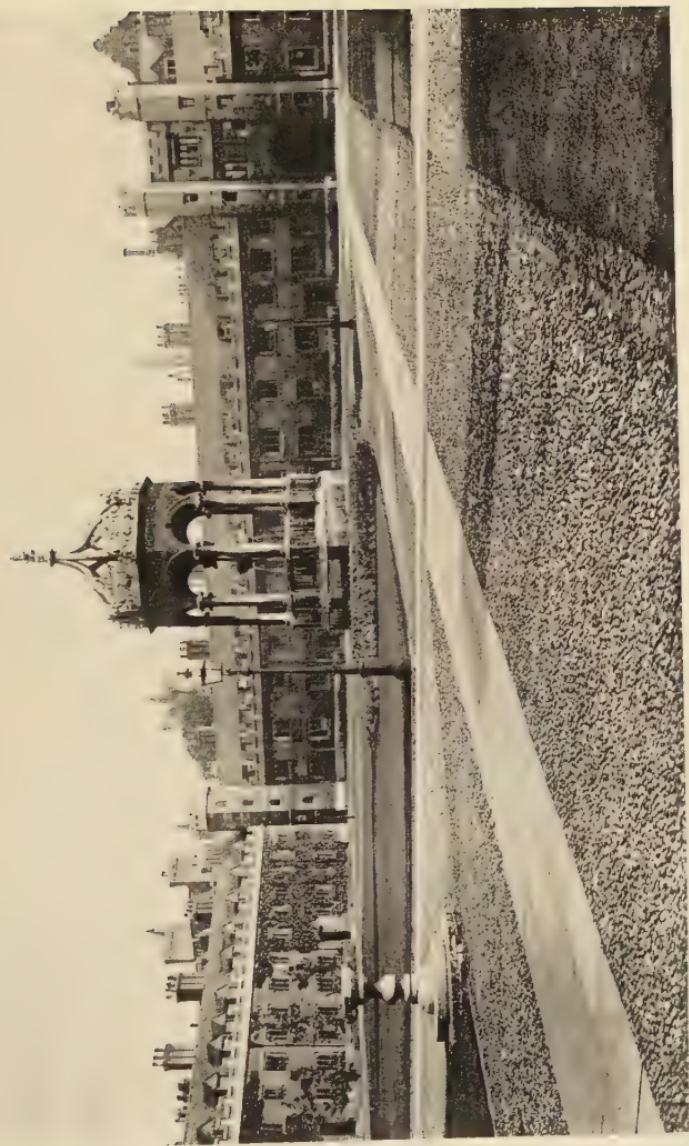
outside Trinity I had some passing glimpses through home ties. I lunched once or twice with the Master of ——, who was said, though no doubt libellously, to have achieved his position through being the only one of the Fellows who could drink off a certain historic college beaker with no stand to it without a pause. To breakfast also but not to boredom with one of the famous Moule family, three of whose brothers became Bishops, himself then a Fellow and tutor of Corpus, I was occasionally bidden. And again to that well-known, popular and as it proved long-lived Professor Bonney of St. John's, a great Alpine climber and of genial habit with young men. I think I am right in saying there was practically no ladies' society in Cambridge in those days such as had already begun to change Oxford, where that lamentable sight of "perambulators in the Parks" foretold by the old school was fast becoming an accomplished fact. There were no married Fellows at Cambridge and the Heads of houses with families were few, while the town could then make but a negligible contribution to even such a circle as there was.

The score or so of men of various ages who led a rather sumptuous life in the umbrageous park-like privacy of Downing had many things said about them, the perfection of their cook, the amount of good wine drunk, their advanced age, and the size of their families at home. As regards the two first items the autobiography of a well-known doctor who was there in the 'sixties is fully corroborative. There were certain individuals, too, of comparatively mature age, and no particular college, hanging about in rusty gowns known as "ten-year men." I forget the mysterious facts attaching to their existence, but I seem to recall them as hovering about billiard rooms like lost souls, relics of a former age. The brilliant editor of the *Light Green*, A. P. Hilton, of St. John's, was an old schoolfellow of mine. He died early, as is well known. I think it was in 1872 that those three and only three immortal numbers were published. Two famous runners came up to Trinity in my year, both of whom I happened to have known previously, Philpot from Eton and Dawson from Marlborough. They both ran the hundred

and the quarter and both raced together that spring and subsequently against Oxford, Philpot as first string in the quarter and breaking the record for it and Dawson premier sprinter, if memory serves me. But I do well remember the extraordinary contrast offered by the pair united in rivalry at Fenners and in combination at Lillie-bridge. Philpot was tall, slight and springy, Dawson, squat, tightly knit, with a short neck and big head—a merry, humorous Yorkshireman, with an accent on which a lifetime at school and college would have made no impression. Being a little deaf, he had brought from school into the athletic world the delightfully alliterative nickname of "Dummy," and as "Dummy" Dawson he became a famous sprinter, thereby unfortunately injuring his heart and bringing to a rather premature end a useful and prominent career in his native city.

It seems a happy coincidence that "Dummy" Dawson should have run, I think, for two years, against "Noddy" Wilson, of Oxford. Wilson acquired the prefix by his humorous rendering of his one and only song, "I had a donkey that wouldn't go," the chorus of which was "Hie, Noddy, Noddy." A friend of mine who had known him at Oxford ran into him some thirty years later in the streets of Durham, where he was a prominent solicitor, and after the first greeting asked him if he still sang the old song. "Well," said he, "it is rather curious you should ask me that, for I haven't sung it since I left Oxford till the other day. I was spending the week-end with a parson friend in the country. There was a little performance in the school on Saturday night and my host asked me to contribute something. So I sang my old song, and it took well. Next day I was asked and consented to read the lessons and you can imagine my horror when I found myself irrevocably committed to the story of Balaam's ass: I can hardly bear to think of it even now."

The winter term at Cambridge was rather dull out of doors for most people. At Trinity, at any rate, there was nothing much doing on the river but tubbing freshmen. Nor



TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

was there as yet any football to speak of in the University nor, of course, any golf or hockey. There was some preliminary running at Fenners, but unless a competitor was nearly up to 'Varsity standard, the Trinity sports offered no prospect. The term 'Varsity, by the way, had only just come in and was used with discretion. It had not been yet vulgarized by the press. I remember the real disgust with which some of us in a country cricket match heard a player from Dublin University describe himself as in the 'Varsity XI ! Nowadays when every little college in England and America runs the term to death I am surprised that Oxford and Cambridge have not long ago abandoned it.

There were no lectures for my sort, though a farcical performance for the unfortunate candidates for Honours was conducted by a Mathematical tutor, a black-bearded, pale-faced, spectacled individual who savoured of John's rather than of Trinity, the very embodiment of the typical smug Wrangler as visualized by us Philistines. Forty or so second-year men attended, to glean peradventure something of the mysteries of Trigonometry and Mechanics, of which subjects few, I fancy, had the faintest notion, else they would not have been there. So it is needless to add they were mainly Public School men. The lecturer seemed to scowl on us as natural enemies, a type brought up to despise Mathematics and for whom he in turn had no use whatever. He at once proceeded to inscribe some hieroglyphics on the blackboard and then sat down. After an interval in which nothing happened and most people looked bored and rather helpless, some bold individual got up and suggested, though in more appropriate words, that the examples on the board were Sanskrit to him and that he had come there hoping to get some light on the subject. " You should have got that before you came in," snapped out our instructor, and sat down again. That was all. I daresay he was within his rights, but the whole thing seemed to me intensely futile. Most of the room I suppose resorted to the crammers or their own unaided efforts, and the lecture, like those others of the first year, petered out, while the

lecturer no doubt returned to his muttons, otherwise his learned leisure, his port wine and his Mathematical textbooks. At any rate, two of these entertainments were enough for me.

Now there "kept" on my bleak Victorian stone staircase one of those lonely birds that a cruel fate or foolish guardians had dumped into Trinity. The home-reared, only son of a widow, taught by a tutor and cherished by a mother and aunts in comfortable seclusion, what could be expected for such a one who furthermore looked like a rather ugly edition of Verdant Green, though he was of a quite different mentality? Apparently he had not a single taste to bring him in touch with his fellow-undergraduates, and there were none of the recognized formalities at Trinity that at smaller colleges gave these solitary freshmen at least a chance. There were several such examples of parental fatuity ploughing their lonely furrow all the time I was up. They would assuredly have found companionship among the forty or fifty men then at Clare, say, or Pembroke. I discovered this particular solitary at the beginning of my second year. Though a youth spent among middle-aged ladies had not qualified him for enjoying Trinity, he was quite an intelligent fellow. But my approaches were not, I fear, wholly philanthropic, for it transpired that, as privately educated, he was strong in Mathematics. So I suggested that he should help me in Mathematics while I—well, read the Classical subjects with him. This was mutually convenient. Sporting his oak, too, for such occasions was effective, as sporting mine was of no earthly use. We could also choose our times and seasons. This was much better than wandering out at specified hours to "Big Smith" or "Brawny Brown" or any other of the Mathematical coaches in the town. My lonely friend, even had he not enjoyed the vast advantage of reading Classics with me, would gladly, I am sure, have helped me in Mathematics for the mere sake of human intercourse, which he so sadly lacked.

I can only suppose his coaching was better than mine, for when in the winter vacation the lists of successful candidates

were printed at length in *The Times*, as was then the custom, and moreover divided as usual into two classes, my name appeared in the First and that of my coach in the Second. I never saw him again, but I heard later from Trinity friends that he terminated his college career prematurely by kicking over the traces and going the most tremendous howler, with drink etceteras. I remembered with a pang that I had taught him to smoke in our studious hours, he venturing timidly on a mild cigarette, in those days despised of all serious smokers. But such a tragic *dénouement*, and so soon too, would have seemed to me, for the youth I had known, absolutely incredible. He had been destined for the Church, but was already wrestling with religious doubts, though he dressed like a theological student at a Methodist college. The lady relatives who reared him bore names associated with the first movement for the higher education of women and the founding of Girton, then about to be built. I once saw him trailing them about the courts of Trinity—a most awe-inspiring group. I should almost as soon have expected the Archbishop of Canterbury to turn a sudden somersault into the depths of vice, as this profoundly respectable and innocent neighbour of mine. Poor fellow, he was the victim of an ill-chosen seat of learning, and I felt somehow that had he been entered at Sidney Sussex across the way he might have ended up an Archdeacon !

I have mentioned that football had not yet become a recognised game at the Universities. It is true there was a "Rugby" pick-up on certain afternoons on Parker's Piece. Etonians, too, occasionally revived the memory of their school days, for I think it was little more, dribbling their tiny little round ball in a friendly game on the Trinity ground. But these meetings had no significance whatever. The fact is that football had hitherto been regarded as purely a schoolboy's game, to be abandoned with manhood, its pipes and cigars, its wine parties and so on. The Public Schools were mostly as keen on it as they are to-day, but its triumphs and glories were purely domestic. The outside world and the Universities neither knew nor cared anything about

them as they did for school cricket. The school football hero abandoned his heroism with his schoolboy days, and unless he could play cricket, run or jump, his career as a hero was finished. The Harrovian might talk about his "fez," but no outsider knew or cared what it meant. It was a popular joke, too, that whenever two or three Rugbeians were gathered together they would always be found discussing the precise date on which "Jones got his cap," an equally cryptic subject. No schools played one another. For they all had different rules, except the few exponents of "Rugby," and for them under the then savage practices of that code it would not have been safe. It is true that in the later 'sixties five London (Rugby) clubs, Blackheath, Richmond, Wimbledon, Ravenscourt Park, all under old Rugbeian influences, and the Marlborough Nomads, were well established, and, dispensing with the hacking over of the school code, were taking the lead in establishing football generally as a man's game, though it remained, whether Rugby or Association, only a gentleman's game for nearly a generation. Oxford in 1870 had only a Rugby and Marlborough club game, in which others were free to play by courtesy. But it was not for a year or two that things were ripe for an inter-University Rugby match.

I am not concerned, however, with that here nor yet with the blending of the other codes into Association, and the establishment of football as a University and college game. I was out of England when all this came about and only know it as history. I had been very fond of football at school, but like nearly everybody else had left it at that, as a mere pleasant memory, and felt no inclination whatever to renew my acquaintance with it in a scratch game. I think such an attitude was then fairly typical. I was tempted, however, to play on one occasion that winter term and should not venture to recall such a trifling incident but for its rather eventful sequel. But it so happened that the Marlborough Nomads had a fixture with Haileybury. Something or other, an invitation probably, for we were not members, induced my Senior-Classic-to-be friend, who had been a most

brilliant forward at school, and myself, who had been nothing but a "back," to take part in the fray. So the two of us, faring forth to Broxbourne station, on the G.E.R., there joined a brakeload of our old schoolfellows for the drive to Haileybury. I remember how it struck me then as something strange and new that all these adult Londoners of the moment should have left their law books and ledgers and hospitals to come out and play football like schoolboys.

Haileybury had in less than a decade become a large and well-equipped school. We played twenty-a-side, then the custom in formal games, and it poured with rain the whole afternoon. The club had, naturally enough, its regular back players, a probability I had overlooked when consenting to play. So I, who had always played back from small boyhood till my last game at school, had now in what I was quite prepared to call my old age, and a light-weight too, to play forward, shove and thrust among perspiring giants and roll in the wet Hertfordshire clay after the Rugby fashion of those days. As a matter of fact I did nothing of the kind, but managed to evade all the worst of these discomforts without, I trust, undue notice, not difficult with forty in the field. It was a hotly contested game, and no point was scored till near "time," when we got a touch-down by no means in front of goal. To my surprise the captain asked me to take the place kick, for I didn't think this had often been my job at school, though, of course, it had a close affinity to drop-kicking. Possibly it flashed across his memory that I was an erstwhile back player thrown by hard but unavoidable circumstances into the scrimmage and meriting some compensation. But the ball was sodden as lead and I had not touched one for three years (the past hour included). My modesty being overborne I accepted the responsibility and, no doubt supported by the sense of it, sent the ball securely over the bar between the posts, and, as it turned out, for nothing counted then but goals, winning a match in which up to that moment I knew in my heart I had played an ignominious part. But all now was well. It proved my last game of Rugby football, and left quite

a pleasant instead of a sour taste in my mouth, as it well might have, for the ages to come.

As an example of how deplorably discursive one can become under the spell of other days, it was not in truth this Haileybury match that tempted me astray, but what happened afterwards, on the way home. Now it was a slow and rather empty train in which we two returned in the dark to Cambridge. Just before reaching Chesterford, a most violent jolt threw us both right across our empty carriage and after a few more spasmodic jerks the train came to a halt. The passengers, perhaps twenty, were now all turned out into the night. The train was on an embankment and we found that the last two or three carriages were turned over on their side, a telegraph post fallen across the rails being the cause of the accident. Only one individual had been in the overturned carriages, a hefty rustic who had got off with a shaking and gave a vivid description of his contortions, as we all stood in the dark on a damp field below the line, awaiting developments. We and our train, it transpired, mattered nothing in the emergency, for the up-express from Cambridge was due and our derailed carriages lay over on its track. The lights of Chesterford station and signals glimmered half a mile away, while a swaying lamp travelling in that direction indicated the guard and engine driver running for their lives to stop the express.

It really was rather an awesome moment, whether or no in a few minutes we were to witness a frightful smash ! How intently we listened for and dreaded to hear the distant throb of an approaching train in the silence of the night, can be imagined. The headlights dashing through Chesterford station would be the first glimpse of its approach and then in about forty seconds—— ! We almost held our breath. The battered rustic ceased to declaim his life's adventure into the gloom, and the humming of the night breeze in the fallen tangle of telegraph wires gave further weirdness to our suspense. The guard's lantern had dwindled to a pin-point, suggesting that the goal was about reached, and when the fireman from our engine a minute or two later shouted out

that it was all right and the Chesterford signals were up, our marooned little company gave a general babble of relief. In about a minute or so two red lights glared at us from Chesterford station and we learned later that the express was from five to ten minutes behind time. As for us, it only remained to uncouple the overturned carriages and speed on our way, all but the rustic, who stoutly refused to trust himself to any more trains and expressed his intention of walking to Cambridge, about ten miles. That the passengers on the express had to wait for a clearing gang was no doubt vexatious, but if they realized what an escape they had, they no doubt suffered the delay with resignation.

Vast as is the difference between the Cambridge of those days and of 1927, in essentials, I am sure that the same cycle of preceding years had seen a much greater change. For this carries one back to 1813, the year in which my grandfather took his degree ; and when I was at college he was eighty, but always ready to discourse much and edifyingly on the Cambridge of his youth. What is more, when I was nearly middle-aged and a still better listener and the old gentleman getting on for a hundred, which he all but reached, he still talked of Cambridge and the pre-Waterloo period generally as if it were but yesterday. Yet better even than this, he left among his voluminous MS. reminiscences, some of which I have published, an account of his Cambridge days.¹ He had been at Bury Grammar School, a great resort in old days of East Anglian youth, and went up to Christ's in 1808. He was a fair Classical scholar, and was ultimately given a Fellowship presumably on those lines. But the books he read in getting a *senior optime* in the unavoidable Mathematical Tripos make my head reel, though apparently they did not trouble him. He was very much, too, of an all-round sportsman as the term was used in his, and my day, so he may stand for a good average type of the more intelligent Cantab of the period.

There were only 800 souls in residence at the beginning of the century, including dons and, I fancy, college

¹ Our centenarian grandfather.

servants, giving roughly 600 and odd undergraduates. Three hundred of these were at Trinity and St. John's, leaving an average of under twenty-five apiece for the other thirteen colleges ! Caius and Jesus seem to have headed this list, while Christ's had about thirty. So long, however, as college tenants paid their rents and enabled the Fellows and scholars to live in peace and comfort, there seems to have been no particular reason why any of them should have worried about numbers. There were no games nor any boat racing, though there was a strong volunteer corps during the long war. Boating parties made expeditions to riverside inns, where they dined at the unholy hours and in the spacious manner of those days, often more well than wisely. They fished, too, both with rod and casting nets. Hunting was much more common in those days, being cheaper, for one thing, and also because almost every mother's son in the country was then perforce accustomed to the saddle. Most college Fellows kept a horse. My grandfather hunted a little and shot a good deal. His fellow-collegian at Christ's, Gunning, who in his *Fifty Years of Cambridge Memories* left far and away the most illuminating description of by-gone University life in existence (but now forgotten), though a keen sportsman himself, declares that shooting was "the curse of Cambridge," in that too free indulgence in it ruined so many promising scholastic careers ! At that time the undrained fens reached up to the very skirts of Cambridge. For miles in many directions the sportsman was free to wander at will for wild fowl, snipe and even pheasants and partridges. Men with long poles for leaping the ditches haunted the outskirts of the town for hire as attendants on University sportsmen.

The dinner hour in those days was about two and the dons sat over their port till four or five, undergraduates according to their tastes and means following suit. Supper was at seven or eight, succeeded by an equally long or longer seance, varied perhaps by bowls of punch. Nothing was thought of being "decently drunk." Heads of colleges and even Fellows often lived in the neighbouring country in college

rectories, farming college lands. Dr. Browne, the Master of Christ's in my grandfather's time, did this on a lavish scale, and being also in charge of the college funds, misappropriated them to the extent of some £1700. He had been Vice-Chancellor too! There was a tremendous row between him and the Fellows, who were for long suspicious but could not make him produce his books. At last the Visitor of the college was called in, the defalcation exposed and the peccant Master dismissed, only to be given, though not by the college, the important living of Gorleston. This was about 1815. My grandfather, who had just got his Fellowship, and on the same day, by a curious coincidence, as he inherited his patrimony at home in Suffolk, lent the college £2000 to tide over the gap in its finances made by the defaulting chief. He soon, however, resigned his Fellowship, took orders, married and occupied a Suffolk living that was in his own gift, farmed, shot and hunted and travelled abroad rather adventurously. After a few years of this, an evangelical religious fervour seized upon his ever-active temperament. He sold his Suffolk property, bestowed his living upon a sufficiently "serious" successor, and at the invitation of Bishop Murray, one of the Athol family which then overlorded the Isle of Man, moved his household gods there. As Archdeacon, Vicar-General and otherwise, he set out to put that then unruly island to rights spiritually and morally. His methods were fearless and rather drastic, and being a South-countryman he encountered for a time not a little opposition. For long periods, under semi-absentee prelates, he was acting bishop and could have succeeded to full episcopal honours there had he wished. For though a bit high-handed, he won popularity and even much love, as well as success in the end. But with a family already approaching double figures, sons at and others going to Rugby, with daughters demanding equivalent advantages, the then isolation of the island from all such things compelled a severance from it, which was mutually regretted.

When over ninety he preached to a crowded congregation in Southwold Church, in his own old county where he had

often preached in youth. About the same date he quite exhausted a hearty middle-aged don in visiting most of the Cambridge colleges on foot in one day, and bursting the while with prehistoric reminiscences. He was a wonderful old gentleman, and as stated lived into his hundredth year to cut down trees, drink his glass of wine, smoke his cigar and talk about pre-Waterloo Cambridge and East Anglia as if they had been yesterday till almost the end, while the frequent notice of the newspapers through the 1880's quite pleased him. When he was at home in Suffolk about 1814, expecting his Fellowship, and the not yet detected Master of Christ's was at war with all the college, he had held back some notice of attendance from my grandfather, an omission which for technical reasons, irrelevant here, would have lost the latter his election. He got word one evening from a confidential servant of the college that to save the situation he would have to be in early chapel the next morning. The distance was seventy miles. He got away from home on his best horse, luckily a fresh one, about half-past seven, baited at Bury, reached Cambridge in good time and appeared in his place in chapel to the confusion of the common enemy, the Master. His horse unfortunately went blind from the strain, but he drove him in double harness for years till one day he broke away from a groom in the stable yard and ran his head fatally against the wall. "Philpot's ride" was still a vague memory in the Christ's combination room till comparatively recent years.

The Cambridge of that remote day on a Sunday morning saw a crowd of curates or acting curates, college Fellows and the like, riding out into the country to do duty in the churches of absentee parsons. They supped together rather hilariously in the evening in clubs of whimsical names, "The Neck or Nothing," "The Apostolic" and "The Tripe." Noblemen by my time had been reduced to passing the usual examinations for a degree and to wearing sober gowns, of velvet, I think, and top hats. In the old days of my grandsire, they had been presented after due residence with their degrees and had received them in radiant gowns of

varied coloured silk, orange, green, crimson or mauve. The May term festivities had no boat races, but the attractions of Pott Fair brought out the whole University in its gala dress, the scarlet of Doctors' robes, the silken sheen of freshly graduated noblemen, the glittering uniforms of Militia officers and the glories of female fashions in long procession on to Midsummer Common, and through the slummy purlieus of Barnwell.

There was also in those old days one great ball, given by the University, the Presidents of which seem to have been the noble youths of the silken gowns, though it is not suggested that they danced in them! Sisters and cousins did not come from all parts of the land to Cambridge as they did even by my time, when railroads were in full use. But couriers were sent out with invitations to summon the fair of the mansions, halls and rectories of Cambridgeshire, who no doubt provided both sufficient and satisfactory partners for such number of dancing men as so comparatively small a society could then produce. My grandmother was there as a girl and very much of a belle, as I can quite believe from her portrait, before she encountered her energetic and adventurous husband who, after a few placid years in Suffolk, carried her off to the Isle of Man. After the rigours and scares of that then remote and semi-barbarous island had ruined her nerves, she returned to East Anglia for the birth of the last two or three of her fourteen children, after which she went to bed for the rest of her life, about twenty-five years, as a nervous invalid. And I think, if it be not impious to say so, enjoyed herself there thoroughly, entrenched behind piles of tracts and serious little books of prose and verse, some of her own composition, and she was quite a theological stylist.

She was the terror of her small grandchildren when summoned at long intervals with immense ceremony to her apartments and conducted tip-toeing into the presence and challenged as to their spiritual condition. To have asked her about the ballrooms and card parties of her youth, even had we been of an age to be interested in social history, would

have been enough to banish us for life from her rather awe-inspiring presence. I do not think there were many of those wonderful ladies of that generation who replenished the earth so abundantly and yet carried on between whiles as if nothing were happening, had the courage to say at the end of it all "Now I am off to bed," and yet more, to stay there. Perhaps she did not say so, but she stayed there and nobody ventured, certainly not the Archdeacon, her husband, to criticise her procedure. That she had courage had been well shown in her youth by an episode that is the real and perhaps only excuse for bringing the good lady and her mother into these pages at all.

Now most Cantabs, and certainly all racing men, know the road from Cambridge to Newmarket over the great bare levels of tillage land that once was fen. The "Swan" at Bottisham, before motor traffic at any rate, was known all over England as a half-way hostelry. Behind the "Swan" lies the village of Bottisham and among woods behind the village which make a notable and grateful break in the bleak landscape that stretches gently upwards and away to Newmarket Heath stands the Hall, a charming oasis of park, woodland and water, in a rather bare and wind-swept country. But this old seat of the Jenyns family is of considerable local interest, if only for their ancient connection with the draining of the fens from the Civil War period onwards. The present house was built about one hundred and fifty years ago, near the site of a former one which, reversing the usual order of such things, was the larger of the two. Conceivably the squire of that day had some abnormal gift of prescience denied to his kind, particularly as the former house was only about a hundred years old and presumably in good condition. Hundreds of overhoused squires and even greater than squires to-day would be thankful, no doubt, if their ancestors had been similarly gifted! When the Jenyns' settled at Bottisham, *temp.* Charles I, the country was largely fen, given over to wild fowl and the amphibious natives who hunted them.

The whole fen country, of which Cambridgeshire possessed

a good share, had been the scene of both Government and corporate attempts at reclamation, mainly futile, since the Middle Ages. The first effective and as it proved permanent undertaking was by a company of Adventurers in 1663, under the chairmanship of the Earl of Bedford—hence the term Bedford Level still applied to the 100,000 acres immediately involved. The “Adventurers” were fourteen prominent men, some of them with names such as Sandys, Gorges and Thynne associated in the Virginia and New England companies. One of them was the first Jenyns of Bottisham, Thomas, son of Sir John Jenyns of Hayes in Middlesex. His son and grandson remained active members of the Board, taking a leading part in the actual direction and progress of these vast works, which had to be all done by hand labour. It was no sinecure. Serious opposition from the natives, who believed themselves interfered with, was constantly encountered. There were mobs and riots, too, for which the soldiers had to be called out, and frequent law-suits. However, “The Old Adventurers,” as this chartered company was called, won through in the end. They received four thousand acres each as their part of the bargain, and for two hundred years successive squires of Bottisham appear upon the Board of the Bedford Level.

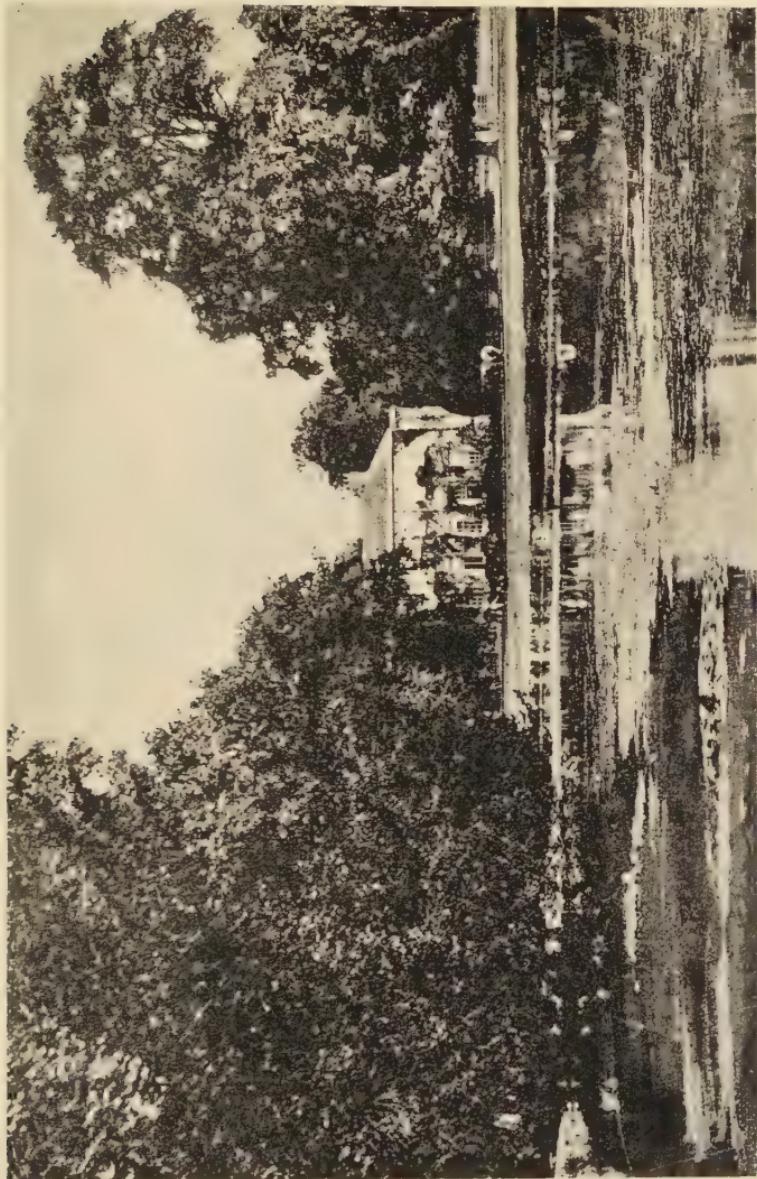
Scoop wheels, like mill wheels reversed, which lifted the water, were beginning to be driven by steam. The first Watt engine used for this purpose was at Bottisham in 1820.

I do not imagine that the gifted Soame Jenyns, the well-known man about town, contemporary of Horace Walpole, and author of political essays and light verse, though owner of Bottisham and Member for Cambridge, was so fond of country life as his forbears and successors. His portrait hangs at Bottisham among a large collection of men and women mostly concerned or connected with the fortunes of the house. The wart on his nose, about which his lady friends in town apparently made jokes, does not appear. The famous Sarah Jenyns, Duchess of Marlborough, hangs not far away. No particular beauty, to be sure, as here depicted, but then a woman who ruled a queen and held

tight the affection of the greatest English general of all time could afford the lack of this, if she did lack it. Possibly she was only plain compared with the great beauty of her much older sister Frances, who on a larger scale hangs upon the same wall. The Duchess of Tyrconnel had neither, I fancy, the rigid virtue nor probably the talent and certainly not the luck of Sarah, marrying as she did upon the losing side. But these two ladies were not born and reared at Bottisham. They were the daughters of a cousin who had a manor near St. Albans, and the house they occupied is still standing. The devastating Lady Masham, the intriguing supplanter in the Queen's favour of her powerful cousin Sarah and whose mother was of this house, is not here—but her brother “honest Jack Hill” hangs at the foot of the staircase. Close by hangs another and much later Jenyns—the full-length figure of a young girl of perhaps fourteen, not quite old enough yet to go to the University balls. Incidentally she is my great-grandmother, and yet more the mother of the courageous old lady we left comfortably settled in bed for life behind a mountain of theological literature. For the two, mother and daughter, shared in the great misadventure that made no little stir in the Cambridgeshire of their day. For the young girl of the picture, Charlotte Jenyns, married the Rev. John Vachell of Littleport near Ely, a parson of substance, a J.P. and active on the bench. Indeed, it was this activity, we may suppose, that singled him out for special attack in the riotous times of 1816. Discontent, following on the long war, the high price of bread, stirred up destructive mobs in all parts of the country. Shops were looted and houses attacked. The country gentry still had the French Revolution on their nerves and their methods of repression were often of an indiscriminate, panicky nature. Magistrates in particular drew the threats or worse of the rioters.

It was on a May evening about dusk, that a large and angry mob attacked Mr. Vachell's house. Though getting on in years he met them boldly at the front door as they burst it open, says the local history, with a pistol in each

BOTTISHAM HALL, CAMBRIDGESHIRE



hand, but was quickly knocked over and the rioters swarmed into the house. My grandmother, then a girl of about fifteen, who now takes up the oft-told tale, fled with her mother and sister, all in their evening dress and satin shoes, into the shelter of the garden shrubberies, and the looting of the house proceeded. In Wilson's *History of the Fen Country* it is stated that in this guise the three ladies ran all the way to Ely to rouse the military. But in any case my grandmother was seized with a girlish desire to rescue some object of her affections, a little clock, I think, from the general ruin. With more courage than prudence she stole back to the house, now all lit up and full of the rabble, and unseen herself in the darkness, took post outside the French windows of the drawing-room, within which was the object of her venture. Patiently waiting her time, till the room was for the moment empty of rioters, she dashed in, found the treasure undisturbed and bore it securely away. But that innocent escapade was fraught with the life and liberty of more than one unfortunate pillager, for in the interval she had seen many with whose names as parishioners she was naturally familiar.

After destroying or carrying off practically everything in the house, including books and private papers and smashing all the china and plate, the rioters began looting the shops and public-houses in Littleport. Thence, having collected all the arms they could find, they went on to Ely, broke open the gaol and did much damage in the town, for there were, as it happened, no troops there. Returning with their plunder to Littleport, they were then attacked by Dragoons and Yeomanry brought hurriedly up from Bury. A pitched battle now took place, the rioters firing from windows and doors till they were eventually routed and seventy-three made prisoners. A special Assize was then held at Ely, when my grandmother was called as an important witness and was in the box on and off for a week—a trying ordeal for a young girl. Twenty-four prisoners were condemned, five to the gallows and nineteen to penal servitude, otherwise Botany Bay. Among those sentenced on my grandmother's evidence

and to the extreme penalty was unfortunately the firebrand brother of her old nurse, and there was a terrible scene about it. The country gentry, as already noted, were in a state of nerves and the sentences were proportionately harsh. It is pretty certain, too, that the looters of a magistrate's house would have got yet shorter shrift than the raiders of shops and taverns. This particular magistrate never recovered from the shock and soon afterwards became a hopeless paralytic. The young daughter who had to play so conspicuous a part bore the traces of it to her grave sixty years later. This was, I believe, the worst of all the outbreaks in 1816 that so badly scared the country squires throughout England.

So much for Cambridge and Cambridgeshire as far as I am concerned. For I have to record with some reluctance that at my own request, which on the face of it should not perhaps have been listened to, I left Trinity that winter. I should have stayed on into the following year and taken my degree in due course, Tripos or no Tripos. As a matter of fact, as things turned out, this was of little moment : a set "period" or two of History and perhaps a second-class at that age would have borne little fruit and been doubtless smothered in the work of some sedentary profession which a degree would probably have entailed. The liking for and pursuit of History did not come to me through libraries and class-rooms and lecturers, and possibly never would have. It came slowly and in the open air, responding to some inner sense and a tendency to day dreams : the libraries appealed later, much later. It came from mountains and rivers, from hills and valleys, from castles, churches and manor houses, from battlefields and the talk of old people, which I daresay sounds fantastic, but I cannot help that. I constantly hear History referred to as dull. But the boot is surely put upon the wrong leg ? The physical atmosphere of Cambridge was uncongenial and its surroundings depressed me, I was rather absurdly sensitive to such influences and perhaps the climate had something to say to it, so when not in company or playing games, I was never

quite happy and had always a pining for the country, as I understood the word. However, I had on the whole a pleasant enough time, formed many acquaintances and made one or two life-long friends, but learned nothing that I did not know before, except a trifle of useless Mathematics that was quickly forgotten. In short, I had decided to take up the profession of a land agent. I loved the country and everything concerning it. Land, too, was then "king" and estate agency offered far more openings than now. The impulses of a boy are not worth dwelling on, but this one, whether sound or not at the time, I have never regretted. So the prospective History Tripos was abandoned and I entered upon a totally new life which, though by a circuitous process, had one result that my wildest dreams would never in those early days have conceived possible.

Like every one else I had duly admired Neville's Court in Trinity, regarding it moreover as a kind of sanctum of the gods and little profaned by undergraduate occupation. My rare visits to it had been those already alluded to, as a delinquent to the junior Dean. It was thirty years before I revisited Cambridge and this was to answer another summons to Neville's Court of a rather different kind. It was from no less a person than Lord Acton, then Professor of Modern History and frequently spoken of by his contemporaries as "the most learned man in Europe." He was then carrying through what I believe was the most cherished achievement of his life—the *Cambridge Modern History* with its many volumes and various contributors. He had in fact honoured me with a personal invitation to be one of the latter. The reader will readily understand with what strange feelings I walked through the great gate of Trinity, once again crossed the old court, and over the steps between the Hall and buttery hatch down into the cloistered pavement of Neville's Court. I thought of the last visits I had paid to these sacred portals, of the shirked History Tripos and my light-hearted abandonment of my college career for paths and ways of life so apparently ill-calculated to bring me back to Cambridge on such an errand as this. I

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think I may be pardoned for feeling that I had made some atonement for my early indifference to its opportunities. Yet I had the further satisfaction of feeling that despite the seeming paradox, had I not shown this indifference, I should assuredly not have been knocking at that door in Neville's Court.

CHAPTER III

A NORTH-COUNTRY RECTORY

I HAD closed my books for good with I fear some relief and burned my boats so far as any of the learned or sedentary professions were concerned. The call of the country and the land had been too much for me. It was in January, 1871, that I took train at Euston for the North, my ultimate destination being a famous farm in Haddingtonshire, generally and more sonorously known in Scotland as East Lothian. With its neighbours of Mid- and West Lothian it was then, as indeed it still is, the premier agricultural region of Great Britain, which in those days meant the first in Europe. We had not then begun to go to school with the foreigners—we had no occasion to. Britain then led the world in agriculture as she did in trade and industry. Her workers, too, were recognised as the most efficient in the world—a hard word for the present generation to believe. But the South only knew of East Lothian by hearsay and even so, only those most intelligently interested in scientific farming. Very few of whom had the initiative to visit it.

If some enterprising agriculturist from Norfolk or Lincolnshire got so far he threw up the sponge at once and came away with his tail between his legs. Even yet, much as times have changed, the same thing would surely happen. Only golfers go there now, and even if they ever left the links to take stock of a country famous in all ways, they would rarely in this trade-ridden country know enough about farming fully to understand what they were looking at. In those days there were no English golfers to seek out the Scottish links. North Berwick and Gullane were unknown

names. None of my Cambridge acquaintances knew anything about East Lothian, as I very soon discovered. My own going there was rather fortuitous. But an old school friend, of whom more anon, had just spent a year on one of the most celebrated East Lothian farms and offered to secure for me the vacancy made by his departure, as the place was rather sought after. I had written to him there occasionally and had the curiosity to identify his whereabouts on the map, for I was fond of maps. But going to Scotland excited me not a little as an ardent disciple of Walter Scott. People did not run about then as they do now, though I fail to perceive that this continual scouring of the roads of England gives very much knowledge of the regions traversed.

A highly farmed country suggested a flat country and I hated such. I now studied the map more closely and though East Lothian naturally enough was inclined to lead, there were great names marked upon its coasts that caught my fancy : The Bass Rock, Tantallon, Dunbar, Fast Castle. Moreover, skirting this seaboard country was a darkly marked range of hills, no dry little downs either, for the recorded elevation ran up to 1700 feet, with a perfect network of streams that I knew without asking betokened the sort of country I loved ! Another Dartmoor and Exmoor surely, within a dozen miles of my future quarters, where, under such conditions, the land might be as flat as it liked ! Almost more than all these satisfactory discoveries, I saw printed dimly across this network of streams and darkly shaded hills the name of the *Lammermuirs*. Now of all Scott's novels *The Bride of Lammermoor* had always stirred me most. I do not know why such a tragedy should have so fascinated one's boyhood, but it did mine. I had long ago visualised every scene of it, Ravenswood being on the slopes of Exmoor and Wolfe's Crag upon the cliffs of Lynton, and here I was, actually going straight into the heart of it all, the real thing—practical agriculture and romantic scenes side by side. The country seemed to promise much, and the promise was more than fulfilled. But we shan't get there in this chapter. The memory, and that a grateful

one, of a household amid the Durham moors that I would fain recall, for the moment, blocks the way.

I had spent many weeks there in the long Vacation before I first went up to Trinity and was to spend many more summer weeks later on. This winter I was but breaking my journey north there, for a few days. It was the home of my old friend already mentioned as having arranged my East Lothian affair. High up Weardale and far above Durham City, surrounded by wild moors and bleak pastoral uplands, not then yet tainted by anything worse than a lead mine or two, lay upon the River Wear the biggish village of B——n. The Upper Wear was still in those days a beautiful moorland river fretting between woody banks over a rocky bed. The village was ugly enough and the people rude, but let that pass. In a capacious Rectory well removed by bowery grounds from his rather unlovely village, my friend's father enjoyed one of those fat livings for which the county of Durham was, and I daresay still is, famous. Though I fancy Stanhope, a little further up the dale, where Butler of "Analogy" fame enjoyed five thousand a year, was long ago interfered with by the Commissioners.

But I am writing of long ago and things that pertained to long ago and that could not be in this restless and gregarious age. I once heard a well-known ecclesiastical official, who was his relative, declare that the Rector of B——n was "the laziest man in England." I am afraid this was not far out, though I was very fond of him and could ill spare him from the tablets of memory. At this time he was, I suppose, about sixty and had a wife and nine children, but not at all on this account to be commiserated with as the proverbial parsonic "Quiverful," since apart from his fat living he had private means. For he was the younger son of a well-endowed landed family in the South, had been at Westminster School when it was still fashionable and at Christ Church. He had been ordained, however, into the Durham diocese, a sagacious step no doubt. For as a man of breeding in a clerical community then conspicuously lacking in it and probably with some interest as well, he acquired one of

its many plums. It is quite inconceivable that he could ever have earned such reward for any parochial activity. We will call him Fosberry.

His three elder sons had been at Marlborough with me, the rest were still children, quite unbroken and of relentless enterprise. His eldest son took after the Rector, was stout, physically inactive, had settled down into a Government office and through his connections became a man about town. The second, my friend, though rather my senior, was the exact counterpart. He took after his mother, a Northumbrian, and was himself of the tall, stalwart Scandinavian type—light hair, blue eyes and a perfectly beautiful complexion. Altogether a very handsome, deep-chested fellow, with a quite extraordinary charm of expression, of neither of which gifts of the gods he ever showed the faintest consciousness. He was a countryman to the tips of his fingers and looked it. When a tall, young new boy at school fresh from the wilds of Durham his companions had been unable to resist paraphrasing a line of Virgil, on some occasion when he was called upon to construe it : “*Rusticus unus erat qui Fosberry nomen habebat.*” Hence, though his name was Lionel, he became (Joe) for all the years till he left school at the liberal age permissible in those days, the doyen of the Wimbledon shooting team and a heavy-weight football forward and of the type valuable only in the heart of the very huge seething and prolonged scrimmages of those unreformed days.

But Joe, who never touched a cricket bat or a racket, I think secretly regarded games as rather childish things, good enough pastime for school days and so forth. His heart was with his gun and his rod. He could not shoot or fish at school, of course. But when not in demand on the football field or at the rifle butts, he scoured the country, the downs or the forest with kindred spirits who in the days before compulsory games were plentiful enough. No ! they were not loafers, as the cricketing school master, himself very often a hopeless Philistine, would now call them. Many of them had worthy tastes, some were collectors or naturalists, a few were poachers, and the neighbourhood

was a paradise for all sorts of rural adventures. There are, I believe, no such boys anywhere nowadays. They have long been stamped out and herded into compounds, otherwise playing fields. With all his fair curly hair, his blooming complexion and frank blue eyes, my friend had some amazingly fixed ideas. When towards the end of his school period his then tutor began to realize the inwardness of his system, he was enormously diverted. His last form master remembered him with joy to the very end of his life, though not a single achievement such as makes for outstanding remembrance had been his.

As Joe went slowly up from form to form, he exhibited a positive genius for doing just enough of every task to avoid inconvenience and not one word more. He regarded Classics not so much with aversion as of no use in any career he foresaw for himself. He was quite un-literary, read little or nothing but *The Field* at any period, though he possessed an abounding sense of humour and was a most admirable letter writer. He had really an excellent head and could do his school work easily, and so continued on his steady progress upward for six or seven years as always to avoid promotion till he felt it would not entail any strain, and then take his remove quite easily. When he got to the Middle Fifth he deliberately settled down there, as it were, for life, and it was the master of that form who so treasured his memory and never forgot the deliberation with which Joe Fosberry decided to remain in it permanently, and the cool facility with which he just did enough to keep on friendly terms with him and yet avoided the faintest risk of promotion to a higher and more troublesome sphere. When he left school, against the word *Form-master* in his generally excellent report, were simply the three laconic words, "Has outlived ambition." Joe's sense of humour was justly tickled. He had it framed and hung over the chimney-piece in his father's study, and the old Rector from his easy chair used to point towards it chuckling with the long stem of his pipe.

The Rectory was a large old-fashioned house and was

fully occupied with a large old-fashioned family. It was Liberty Hall in the freest sense. The junior brigade, mostly still in single figures, made the house and indeed the welkin ring when they felt cheerful, which was generally. An occasional cuff on the head from the easy-going elder brothers and futile protests from their pretty, gentle elder sisters was, I think, the full sum of their discipline. Their mother, a gentle lady much taken up with actual nursery cares, could not possibly chase them about. One heard fierce conflicts with the maid servants in back regions at times, and then the turmoil would be shifted into the garden to terminate in a stampede down long corridors running through the house. The Rector, esconced in his study, was safe, for that room was sacred, and he was a little deaf.

This was all very well, but these spirited urchins ranged the village at will and the village was not a sweet Auburn inhabited by gentle swains but by extremely rude and rough ones, mainly miners and the like. The language that these precocious infants collected there and imported into their childish gambles was appalling. If it had been confined to their play hours it would not have much mattered to me, at any rate, but at the midday meal, our lunch and the children's dinner, there were some terrible moments that even at this distance of time when the sinners, if alive, will be bald or grey, still make me shudder. It was the only fly in the ointment of my many happy days there. Fortunately it was not often that we elder ones were at home for that children's half-hour, but when that happened it was to me always a half-hour of dread. It was the youngest, aged five, who was the particular terror. The others had some glimmering that the blasphemies of their village friends were not acceptable in the family circle. But the sharpness and fluency of that five-year-old were so far ahead of his sense of decorum, it was sometimes like a bomb exploding when, spoon in air, he took the floor or rather the table. There was nothing for it, of course, but instant expulsion, but then the bomb had fallen and the mischief was done for that day, to be possibly even exceeded on the next

I must hasten, however, to say at once that these astonishing young libertines grew up, so I was credibly informed, into as quiet and well-behaved lads as have ever been seen. A good sound stock seems to have told in the end. But it is not often that the youth of a family sow all their wild oats between the ages of five and ten and then settle down into reformed characters. Joe himself, I have a suspicion, must have had an adventurous childhood, though probably the Rector in his day still exercised some control. For he confessed that on one occasion, during midday service on Sunday, about the moment his father was in the middle of his sermon, he mounted a high adjoining wall and flung a large brick with a crash on to the roof of the nave. The village police hunted high and low for the perpetrator of this sacriligeous outrage, but they never thought of looking in the Rectory.

The Rector was a dear old man, but I think he really did justify his distinguished relative's verdict already quoted. He used to drift downstairs about ten or eleven in flowered dressing-gown, velvet skull-cap and slippers to a scrappy uneasy breakfast. He then retired to his spacious study—though I remember no books there—to sink into his well-worn arm-chair, put his feet up on a rest, light a meerschaum pipe with a long cherry-wood stem, and thus recline till lunch with its dramatic and terrifying possibilities. He then sat on at ease, or in summer time made occasional brief excursions into the garden.

I well remember it was such a rare thing to see him arrayed in tall hat and long clerical frock-coat going down the drive that it was quite startling. But he looked a very fine old gentleman when thus bedizened for some unavoidable appointment. Of course he had a curate who ran the parish, so far as it was run, of which I am no judge. An elderly man was he, of the homespun breed and St. Bees training, a weak, pathetic little person, with a wife and children, who mutely invited one's compassion. Joe ran his father's lay affairs : the garden, the stable, the cows, the glebe, with any workmen employed, the cellar and all things pertaining to

male supervision. It was over his glass of port at dinner, though he was very temperate, that my own daily intercourse with the Rector generally began. With a brief drawing-room or garden interval, it was prolonged from his couch of state in the study, where in that cold upland region a cheerful fire was always burning, till towards midnight. I was a favourite of his, I know, for I listened to his flow of reminiscence with an unflagging interest that old men do not always get, and he doubtless recognized and appreciated it. I used to like listening to old men ; I had even then, as I have remarked, a strong feeling for the past, even for the every-day commonplaces of its life at first hand. Moreover, the old Rector very seldom had a listener from the outside world. B——n was hopelessly remote. There was no society of any kind within reach and guests in a household so populous and preoccupied were naturally infrequent. And thus the Rector in his long chair filled and refilled his long pipe unceasingly, and recounted to me the thousand incidents that had made up his life—and other people's, till he had settled down into that arm-chair perhaps twenty years agone.

There were old days at Westminster in the 'twenties before Dean's Yard was railed round, and when any plebeian who ventured a short cut across the boys' playground had to fight his way. Christ Church offered a still more varied and richer field of reminiscence. His father's sumptuous home, too, in Blankshire, and the bygone worthies of that famous shire with whom in his unfettered youth he had dined and wined, hunted or shot, all these things he talked of with an amazing memory, and no bad turn of humour. Of feasts, too, he told, and of good wines he discoursed wistfully and fondly. For beyond doubt he loved a good dinner. It was written all over him, though it was his lot to lead the simple life, and he accepted it with admirable philosophy. The strenuous life, however, he had rejected unqualifiedly. I can see him now as if it were yesterday, his large extended dressing-gown-clad figure, his full, red and rather puffy but good-humoured face, surmounted by the velvet skull-

cap ; spectacles pushed up his forehead and his big, rather prominent blue eyes twinkling underneath them as with a wave of his long pipe stem he emphasized his points.

I liked, too, the stories and anecdotes of his early days here and there in the diocese of Durham. The splendour of the Bishop before his princely income from coal royalties had been cut down to a paltry £10,000 a year, the feudal hospitalities at Bishop Auckland and at the Duke's at Raby Castle, or again of the weird squires and still weirder clergy of the surrounding dales. For that matter there were plenty of queer characters still about the Wear and Tees, and Joe, who would be all this time probably reading *The Field* or tying flies, and always regarding my more than toleration of the "governor's yarns" with surprise not unmixed with gratitude, would chip in with some of the local oddities of whom there were heaps. Joe himself had a great sense and gift of humour, and was also a past master of the vernacular speech. Frank, though earlier to bed as became a long overgrown schoolboy, made a fourth sometimes on these occasions round the study fire. A handsome six-foot slip of a lad just finished with Marlborough, and characteristically more intimate with Savernake Forest and the downs than with its playing fields. Like his elder brother, he had no little contempt for book-learning, but like him had much mother wit and practical capacity, and was also a countryman and a sportsman to his finger tips. He knew all the oddities in the district, too, as well as its birds, and could tell good stories of them in the best vernacular. Poor lad, an untoward fate cut him off at the entrance of manhood.

Now the upper Wear in those days was quite a good fishing stream. The woody reaches were still beautiful and as yet unspoiled. The waters sparkled over broad stony shallows, or with smooth, swift, amber current, lapped the base of birch-tufted crags ; while green canopies of oak and ash leaves flickered then over its trembling waters. There were plenty of deep swirling pools, too, where the bull trout running up from the North Sea with the autumn floods to spawn in the head waters, made pause in their journey. But the

fresh run bull trout of this north-east coast, unlike the ordinary sea trout, refuses to rise on his upward trip. As a lanky kelt in the following spring he will often enough seize the trout fisherman's fly and give him the diversion of landing a not very beautiful three or four-pounder. Joe, however, had recently had the good fortune to find a fresh run five-pounder in an unwonted mood. Its image hung over the chimneypiece in the study as if in direct contradiction of the framed statement of his old form master just below it, that he "had outlived ambition."

After my many years on and off of sedulous trouting in Devonshire with creditable results for my age and experience, I was rather pleased with myself as an angler. Moreover, I had killed a good many trout in the Kennet at Marlborough. But the first summer I spent with Joe on the Wear I had the conceit knocked clean out of me. For one thing I was up against educated trout, for the North-country miner and mechanic then as now was the most assiduous fisherman and most of the streams were free to them. None of the Devonshire trout in those days were educated at all, and they were very numerous. The Devon proletariat were not, nor are they now, keen anglers like those of the North and of Southern Scotland, partly perhaps for the reason that all the West-country streams were preserved even in those days. But the trout of the Wear were highly educated. I found that my friends there never dreamed of fishing after the springtime with anything but single horsehair, and such a thing was unheard of in Devonshire. Joe not only made all his own flies, tying them on hair, but made his own rods, beautiful little feather-weights, such indeed as you may buy nowadays but were then un procurable. My Exeter-built rods passed in the South as light and handy, but my friends up here laughed at them. That no rods out of a shop nor any flies from a tackle maker, were fit to fish with, was an article of faith with these folk and their neighbours.

So I used to go forth armed with one of their home-made rods, which I must say in those days of rather wobbly, top-heavy fly-rods was a real treat, certainly for fishing with

horsehair. The prejudices of Joe and his friends were carried perhaps a little far. It was not only that Wear trout would have nothing to say to any South-country tackle shop flies, but it was imperative to carry with you the special brand of landing net in use with the natives. This one had an ash shaft about six feet long with a spike at one end and a fixed net at the other, large enough to hold a salmon comfortably, though only trout of a quarter to half a pound demanded its services. Supported by this the Wear angler in mid-stream suggested the figure of a Roman standard-bearer. A handy little net that would hang on the basket strap, as used in a hundred rivers, some often exactly like the Wear or even much more dangerous, was taboo. You must not use that in the Wear ! You would be drowned to a certainty. It might not be at once, but sooner or later such a fate was assured, despite the fact that waders were not yet in use up there, and that you could swim like a duck. Joe and Frank held firmly to this creed. I jibbed at the local landing net, however much I might outrage local traditions.

Occasionally we three made long pilgrimages across the moors to the wild region,

“ Where Tees in turmoil leaves his source
Thundering o'er Cauldron and High Force.”

taking a pony along to carry our traps or any one of ourselves that might feel betimes the need of it. I look back fondly to these two-day excursions as opening out a little bit of wild England that otherwise I should perhaps never have seen. Crossing the lonely Bollinope moors by an old packhorse trail, we passed over the shoulder of Powlaw Pike and Ravens Seat, the latter almost reaching the 2000 ft. altitude. And as we descended, the whole of upper Teesdale with the Pennine range spreading westward from it to the Lake mountains lay before and beneath us with the village of Middleton, our immediate object, at our feet : a noble prospect on a bright summer morning. I was tolerably familiar with Scott's *Rokeby* and if I did not recall the lines on my first visit, I came better prepared upon

a later one. For the whole country of the Romance here bursts into view, as it burst upon the horseman in Scott's poem.

" Nor Tees alone in dawning bright
Shall rush upon the ravished sight,
But many a tributary stream
Each from its own dark glen shall gleam."

Down the river to the southward lay Barnard Castle and the woods of *Rokeby* near by it. Just beneath us we could follow the whole trail from the Pennine mountains of "Silver Lune from Stanmore wild," and farther and fainter could be seen the line of the Greta, through Brignall woods, a name familiar in a sense to the world of that day, for the songs from *Rokeby* had been popular and were not yet forgotten. Our mothers and aunts at any rate had been wont to warble in drawing-rooms of how "Brignall woods are fresh and fair and Greta banks are green," and how "they would rather rove with Edmund there than reign an English Queen."

Thence dropping down to Middleton we and our loaded pony, like pedlars, would beat our way up the road to High Force, where the Tees falls sheer over a whinstone cliff, the finest waterfall in all England. Even then it was an occasional object of pilgrimage to tourists and supported a neighbouring hotel. After this came a wilder road, within more or less touch with the Tees, over a bleak, stonewall country sprinkled with the gleaming whitewashed homesteads which were such a feature of the Duke of Cleveland's great domain. High on our left hand just across the Tees rose the craggy scaurs of the outer ramparts of the Lune forest, which in Mickel Fell creeps up to a height of 2600 feet. And as we approached Cauldron Snout, the second and much the highest but lesser volumed of the two falls of the Tees, the high moors confronted us at close quarters. While away to the right those of St. John and Weardale head spread upward and away, dark and lonely to the Northumbrian border. At a little inn not far from here we stabled the pony and bespoke a shakedown for the night.

The river by now, deprived of the water of many becks, is of smaller volume when it leaps out of the purple or russet solitudes that then comprised one of the most famous grouse moors of the North, though driving, I think, had not yet been resorted to, with its much larger results. But the birds, I remember, used to rise in quantities as we picked our way over to the head of the Falls through the long heather. The Whinstone ridge down which the Tees here leaps in two or three broken cataracts is about 200 feet in height. It shoots out from the Pennines and runs straight into Northumberland and across that noble county to the sharp bluff which terminates it so conspicuously within easy sight of the Great North Road and railroad. At the foot of the Falls the Maze beck comes in from the west and at its junction the three counties of Durham, Westmorland and Yorkshire abruptly meet. It was in truth a wild spot. The roar of the Cauldron seemed to intensify the far-reaching silence that away from its thunder was only broken by the call of the curlew or the intermittent clucking of uneasy grouse.

Of course we fished in the river below the Falls among the roundest and most glassy boulders that in a long life I have ever encountered. We fondly flattered ourselves that we could wade anywhere. But here we tumbled about like ninepins and got very wet and very cross. I suppose they were whinstones ! I have never waded to my knowledge on that formation since, thank goodness. The monster alpine-stock landing nets of the Wear, too, had been left behind as too cumbersome for transportation, which made it worse for my companions, as they missed these invaluable supports ! The trout, moreover, were small and not worth the acrobatic efforts demanded for their capture. But a few hundred yards above the Falls in the heart of the high moor, the Tees subsides into a wide, deep, sluggish reach of black peaty water, and if I remember rightly continues this so uncanny gait for about a mile upwards. I have never seen the head waters of a moorland river behave so strangely. This dour stretch is known as the Weald. Of course on each visit we fished it industriously, hoping always

for a "sockdologer" out of its dark depths, but never so much as a sprat rose to our flies! I met a very old gentleman the other day who had once been a great fisherman throughout this country. "Do you know the Weald?" he said. "I do," I replied. "Did you ever catch fish in it?" "No." "Neither did I," said he, and knowing what he had been, that was conclusive.

But we did not follow these long and delightful moorland trails merely to catch fish. Joe had a real feeling for a wild country, and the colder and wilder the better he liked it. He was in truth a most uncompromising North-countryman and cherished an invincible belief through life that the South was an enervating and inferior region, though how such a creed could have survived six winters of school life among the Wiltshire downs Heaven knows. But there is no doubt that he had an extraordinary affection for his own country-side, though what he felt for it found chief expression in a curious prejudice against all others. Nor was it merely sport that attracted him to it. For in summer days he would take his young sisters whole day walks across the moors, and many a pleasant jaunt I thus had with them. Yet with all his physical activities and practical capacity he had quite a touch of the old Rector's inertia. I used to wonder what he expected to make of his life, staying on at home and running his father's Rectory and glebe, and at three-and-twenty unqualified for any definite profession. He seemed, however, to have a perfect faith in some star invisible that would land him on his feet. He did make one prodigious effort and went out to have a look at Canada, but returned disgusted with its appearance by literally the very next boat.

He was very shy of young women, a strange characteristic in a fine-looking, attractive man. In truth his lines had not been much cast among them. I am pretty sure that he had so far little more than a rather bashful nodding acquaintance with any girl of his own class. But in a great hour for him a girl friend of his sister's came to stay at the Rectory for prolonged visits. There was no escaping this. Joe fell in love with her and she, though quite a sophisticated

young woman, fell in love with him, and I am not surprised. She was eligible, too, from every point of view, and lived with an elderly widowed father in a nice little place in the county of Durham. So in due course Joe had only to transfer himself there and to find a job, which, having married a certain amount of local influence, he very soon did : some sort of out-door inspectorship under Government.

I found him a dozen years later happy and flourishing, as indeed he should have been. But a married life, comparatively in the world, seemed to have made no impression on a certain stubborn temperamental indolence so odd in an active out-door man. Indeed, he confided to me that when he had so fortunately been offered his appointment, he had stipulated for reservations of extra time to himself—pretty good nerve on his part ! But the powers accepted his terms and he kept his job, I think, permanently, and I am sure did all that he undertook to do admirably. But the Old Adam in another respect clung to him persistently. His eccentric hatred of social gatherings proved incurable. I had not seen him for ten years and felt curious to know how the amenities of marriage to a sociable lady in a normally social neighbourhood had affected him. He seemed to me to be delightfully and most happily placed. There were a couple of lady friends, I remember, staying in the house of which he was now head and host, and as such no one could have been more easy and charming than he. I should not trouble here with such a commonplace interlude but for the shock I presently received. His sociable wife was having a small garden party, preparations for which and the guests to be invited were naturally a subject of some preliminary table talk. Nor did I notice that my host, except for occasional humorous criticisms on the proposed guests, took no direct interest in the discussions. The party in due course took place and had got well into its stride when I suddenly realized that my friend was not there. "Where in the world is Joe," said I, to his wife. "Joe ! Good gracious, you surely didn't suppose that he would appear ! Do you see that wood ?" pointing to a grove just outside the grounds. "Well, he

is sitting in there smoking a pipe and won't turn up again till everybody has gone." "Does he always do this?" I said. "Yes, always." His eccentric dislike, too, of going South or anywhere very far from home had also proved incurable. As an otherwise attentive husband he would escort his wife on her occasional trips to London, but he told me himself that he never left the station at Euston and always took the next train back to the North.

I never saw him again, but he sat on the local Bench and I am sure with sound judgment, and was still holding his unexacting job twenty years later, at any rate. His rods certainly, and I think his guns, were put away rather early in life, and even his always entertaining letters gradually died away and I assumed that the strain of keeping up even so intimate an early friendship as ours was on a piece with the rest. I saw his death briefly announced a year or two ago, and that is all I know.

But to return to the Rectory : it was an iron winter, that of 1870-71, when I stayed there en route for Scotland. We had skated at Cambridge on the fens before the end of term. I had skated at Christmas and through the New Year in Wiltshire, and now even the pools and stony rapids of the Wear were frozen tight. For two or three consecutive days we all went up to a secluded part of the river, taking our lunch and lighting a fire on the shingly beach. The girls and ourselves with our skates, the infant brigade to slide off a fraction of their unquenchable activities and tumble clamorously about on the rough ice of frozen shallows. I always recall one beautiful scene when every twig in the wild woods that in those days fringed or overhung the frozen river was crystallized by hoar frost, and how the wintry morning sun, too weak to melt it, turned the whole into a vast lacework of silver. A rapid river thus caught and silenced once in twenty or thirty years is always impressive. One of those short January days, too, found our youthful ardour still unquenched when the moon rose and lit up most gloriously the shining ice-bound stream and the frosted tracery of the overhanging woods.

What of those secluded streams and woods now, I wonder ? Even then you could see on the horizon at night the flare of the collieries ! In that winter week with its long evenings the Rector's reminiscences with myself as listener made greater play than in the shorter lamp-light hours of summer. The event of that moment, however, was the Rector's tithe dinner at the village inn. The old gentleman pulled himself together nobly for this annual function and took the chair for an hour or so, then, gracefully retiring, left Joe and myself to face the aftermath—the port, the hot brandy and water, and the churchwarden pipes. There were hard-bitten sheep farmers from the hills at the feast, tradesmen from the village and a squireen or two from up the dale, whom I met occasionally outside and who always came back to me somehow when in after years I read *Wuthering Heights*.

Then, again, whether summer or winter, there was the Rector on Sundays, when, roused so to speak from his long week-day repose, he descended to the breakfast table in his orthodox black coat and white tie. It was quite a shock to see him thus in full war-paint sitting up eating his eggs and bacon and griddle cakes with the rest of us. Of course every one went to morning service in the large church adjoining the Rectory, when the Rector, sending breezy whiffs of peppermint all over the church, preached in a black gown and bands one of his old sermons (he made no secret of this !) or somebody else's, to a rather sparse congregation. A gifted young gentleman in the parish played the organ and, I fancy, ran the music. The leading singer was the station-master, a youngish, handsome man and a really tremendous swell with glossy black whiskers and immaculate top hat. He was son of the master of the Grammar School, which ancient little building adjoined the churchyard. It was good to see the relief of the old Rector when, with the sense of work well done and the Sunday supper finished, he once more donned his flowered dressing-gown and velvet cap and sank peacefully, pipe in hand, into his old arm-chair, with a clear week of repose before him. Dear old man !

But there were other occasional breaks in this tranquil scene. Now Bishop Baring, his Lordship of Durham at that day, was a man of wealth in addition to the paltry ten thousand a year still left to the episcopal income. He was a hospitable soul and had recently come to the conclusion that a good champagne lunch occasionally to all and sundry of his clergy and their belongings would cheer their hearts and do no harm to their souls. The good prelate actually issued a general invitation to the diocese every Thursday for the summer months, to come and eat and drink and be merry amid the feudal glories of Bishop Auckland Palace. That is to say, he was sumptuously "At home" every Thursday, assuming, good benevolent man, that his widely scattered flock, which in those days before Newcastle had a bishop, reached up to the Scottish border, would somehow distribute themselves over the weeks. But nothing so inhospitable was hinted at as any limitation of days of attendance, nor had the bishop, when the kindly words "and party" were added to the invitation cards, not yet very familiar with the North, quite reckoned what he was in for. They had been inaugurated some two years, I believe, when in the summer of 1869 (I think) I had the privilege of taking part in one of these great ecclesiastical scrambles for the choicest of meats and the best of drink. The Rector went twice a summer, allowing himself that little privilege as his family firmly rejected his offers of escorting them to the crowded banquet hall. This was all the better for him. He not only enjoyed his lunch but a crack with many old friends in the stately rooms and grounds of the castle. He was in at the very beginning of the series, and had entertaining stories of the first great rush, when simple-minded parsons came pouring out of the upland dales and moors, invitation card in hand, wife on arm with oftentimes a following of even rawer girls and boys, sisters and aunts. It looked as if they would eat their hospitable bishop out of house and home. It was a bit risky, too, turning these hearty, plain-faring men on to unlimited champagne, despite the white tie (in a big bow with high

collars) they sported. Still a merry parson here and there did not amount to much in Co. Durham in those days.

The Rector saw all the earliest of the fun and it greatly spiced his anecdotal store. Some of them, inexperienced in the social amenities, came every week at first with all their following, the treat they thought was too good a one to be missed. But by the time I made my venture the chaos of early days had settled down into some sort of understanding, and the long tables in the banqueting hall were not occupied by more than two relays. Having armed the portly wife of a Northumbrian parson to the fresh-laid board and supplied her immediate wants, my place beside her was seized by a greedy Archdeacon. Not having the nerve to eject such a dignitary, I had to retire to the reserves, and when the second rush came on I made no mistake in dallying with elderly vicaresses. The Rector, fairly aroused by the unwonted crowd and good cheer, had revolved among his rarely but well-met friends, to whom, as became my tender years, I had left him for a leisurely survey of the strange and motley throng. That he got well placed at the first table goes without saying, and he chaffed me not a little on the way home at my discomfiture. As for Joe, who had, of course, jeered at my sharing "the governor's beanfeast," his remarks were withering. But the episcopal castle alone was worth seeing, to say nothing of the crowd collected within it.

The Grammar School, already alluded to, beside the churchyard was undoubtedly the great curiosity of B——n. Its gable peered above the foliage surrounding the Rectory grounds and in the gable hung a cracked bell which in the mornings and afternoons used to clang vigorously. A Rectory jest had it that at such a moment it was well not to go into the village by the school lane lest you should be swept off your feet by the wild rush of one boy. I think there were two, possibly three, scholars in those days. Joe and his two brothers had learnt their elements there before going to Marlborough, and I am not sure that one or two of the present young brigade did not help to enliven the gaieties which followed the ringing of the school bell. It was an old

endowed Grammar School for teaching the Classics, but none of the natives of B——n wanted to learn the Classics, or if they did, it was not from the easy-going old fly-fisherman who drew the master's salary.

He was a really great fisherman though, this old man, and wrote a book on angling with coloured plates of flies tied and illustrated by himself. To him Joe and Frank owed much of their lore and skill with the rod and, I might add, much of their ineradicable angling prejudices. He had half a chapter on his monstrous landing net and in ridicule of all others, which he classed as cabbage nets, though precisely what that is I do not know. He wrote much of his book in school hours when Joe and his elder brother were swelling the numbers of his school to about half a dozen. Joe declared that on one occasion, while the master was absorbed in the illustrations, he absent-mindedly substituted the figure of a big bull trout on the blackboard for the Mathematical riddle with which he hoped to keep them quiet, while he got on with his more serious work. Great as was his experience of trout, I do not think it extended beyond the Wear and Tees. I cannot imagine what the dry-fly purist of later days would have said to the book, for this ingenuous author held all the trout rivers of the South to be sluggish and full of big lethargic fish that any fool could catch. There was a great raid by a Government Commission on all these half-moribund Grammar Schools in the early 'seventies and B——n fell in it, to rise no more. It so happened that the Commissioner who reported on this part of England was an old friend of my family and had wonderful stories to tell us (and print in a Blue Book) of the humours that heralded the extinction of some of these decayed foundations. More than one case he related of a master, secure in his small endowed salary, secretly bribing his only scholar to absent himself ! I well remember that this angling pedagogue on the Wear and his school caused our Commissioner friend particular amusement and stood out even in the treasure-house of oddities which his investigations had so richly stored for him.

CHAPTER IV

A GREAT EAST LOTHIAN FARM

I SHOULD no doubt remember something of how the great county of Northumberland struck me on that January day as I traversed its length from Newcastle to Berwick on the North-Eastern, if I had not come to know it so intimately in later years as to obscure those first impressions. I am sure that they must have been eager and vivid, for Northumberland is an outstanding county for anyone who has the right feeling and perception for such things. It is not as Northamptonshire or Nottingham or one of the home counties. Its very shape to my fancy, even in childhood, had special character and significance. The very cap and crown of England, a bold, defiant-looking county, and one, too, that bore the brunt of the long centuries of Anglo-Scottish strife.

I cannot recall the first sight of the distant Cheviots to the westward, the shimmer of the Coquet urging its woodland way towards the sea, the great shell of Warkworth Castle, grimly lifted above a waste of shoreward-stretching pasture lands, the towers of Alnwick dominating the green vale down which its chastened river meanders to the sea now close at hand, and, finally, the mysterious up-lifted Pie of Bamborough looming large against the far-receding shore. How these landmarks of the North-Eastern route from Newcastle to Berwick struck me on this, my first adventuring of it, as I say, I cannot clearly recall, but that I missed none of them I am certain. But I do remember well rumbling over Tweed by the high-level bridge at Berwick, which is always, to my thinking, one of the most

inspiring five minutes of railroad travel in all England, for I thought then, as thousands of people think to-day, that I was entering Scotland.

Now there was living till quite recently a notable citizen of Berwick, Captain Norman, R.N. (retired), the archæological and historical guardian of that ancient town's history and honour, and himself some time its Mayor. To him the Tudor fortifications, the Edwardian walls, were all sacred ground. He wrote and lectured on them constantly, and many a tourist party has been shepherded round them by the enthusiastic veteran. I have even known him drive comparative strangers round the neighbourhood and point out to them the Bounds of Berwick, Lamberton toll bar, the confluence of Whiteadder and Tweed, and all the rest of them. Nothing roused the Captain so readily as being confronted by some unfortunate wight who thought the Tweed to be the international boundary. On one notable occasion, two hapless Scots returning from some far country were on the train running over the railway bridge spanning the river. "Eh, man," said one of them, slapping his friend on the knee, "it's guid to be in Auld Scotland again!" But by ill-luck the Captain happened to be the only other occupant of the carriage and he rubbed into those homing Scots a lesson in geography that was not likely ever to fade.

What North-bound Southerner ever pauses to walk round the ramparts of Berwick, or take survey of that old and weather-beaten, red-roofed, wall-girt town so pregnant with the dramas and tragedies of two nations? Or how many of the good folk that tear about the highways of Great Britain have ever stood where the Tweed salmon enter that classic river from the North Sea. One would think that the sight of Berwick and the mouth of Tweed, spanned by its many-arched old bridge, as seen from this high vantage point, would arouse some sort of curiosity if not something deeper. If so, it stops at that! Nearly everybody goes or has gone to Scotland, but in all the years of a long life I have not met half-a-dozen Southerners who know Berwick. Yet North-bound motorists must surely pause there betimes, if only

TUDOR RAMPARTS, BERWICK



for petrol ! But then if you want to get to Perth for dinner, there would probably be no time for such dallying ! At any rate that seemed a memorable moment to me when I first crossed the Tweed nearly sixty years ago. Berwick town we had been taught in our geography books in those days to regard as a little kingdom all to itself, theoretically independent of its two great neighbours, but that the Scottish territory round it was included, I doubt if any of us knew. Actually, of course, the town and about fifteen square miles of territory beyond the river had been part of England ever since James VI and I, on his joyful and gorgeous progress to the cash, the cakes and ale of his new southern kingdom, added Berwick and its " bounds " to it in pure lightness of heart. Scotland did not like it. Scotsmen do not like it even now. It is so obviously part of Berwickshire. The farmers of that Scottish shire have to do most of their business and shopping across their border in an English town. For though " Duns dings 'a," according to its bombastic motto, the county seat is but a wee town for all its brave boast. The grievance is purely academic, to be sure, and of slight practical consequence, but some old friends of mine used to feel it dreadfully, almost as the Spaniards must feel about Gibraltar ! Their sense of historical justice was outraged. When in driving with them into Berwick we crossed the bridge over the Whiteadder, near upon the " Bounds," I used to feel as an Englishman quite guilty and uncomfortable, and when we recrossed it I used to ask them if they were not feeling like Captain Norman's two Scotsmen, only more so—" It's guid to be in auld Scotland again."

I knew nothing, of course, of such subtleties as I first went rumbling along on a slow train from Berwick towards my still distant East Lothian destiny which bore the then mysterious name of Drem. Assuredly no Southerner of that day had ever heard the strange monosyllable. It sounded to me more like a mountain in Carnarvonshire than a railway junction in an agricultural country. Thousands of southern golfers know it now, though they do not know East Lothian outside its seashore. For Drem is the

junction for North Berwick and also gives ready access by road to many-golf-coursed Gullane.

Both road and railroad, for they keep near together, get exciting after Berwick. Northumberland from the North Road (or rail) is a spacious land of great distances. It rarely comes up to the window to distract the attention of such as prefer picture magazines to English landscape. Indeed, its significance might not strike the ordinary traveller whose intake of a country that does not hit him in the eye is pretty dull. But after Berwick both main line and North Road skirt the edge of the high red cliffs into which Scotland suddenly lifts the long, flat but rugged coast-line of Northumberland. The North Sea opens wide, far below, and if on the alert, when sky and ocean are bathed in sunshine and at rest, one can get fleeting glimpses of red-roofed fishing hamlets, snuggling under ruddy cliffs lapped by a turquoise sea that make unforgettable bits of composition and colouring. They were certainly not thus illumined on that dull January afternoon, when they gave me my first glimpse of Scotland, nor had I then the faintest notion that the very ridge on the left, that was pushing our road so close to the cliff edge, was that of Halidon, where Edward III so effectively revenged upon the Scots his father's catastrophe at Bannockburn. Sir Walter was assuredly no bigoted Scot, for in *Marmion* he has given us Flodden which every one knows, while he wrote a whole drama on Halidon hill, which nobody knows. Certainly I did not upon this rather memorable day of my youth. But the defeat was so crushing and the slaughter of the vanquished so great that the English vainly fancied that they had finished with the Scots for a lifetime. It was the archers as always.

Sings Sir Walter :

“ See it descending now the fatal hail shower
The storm of England’s wrath, sure, swift, resistless,
Which no mail coat can brook.”

Dusk was beginning to fall, I remember, as half an hour later we entered the Valley of the Eye leading up to the Pease Pass, which lets the route to Edinburgh through the

eastern flank of the Lammermuirs, that romantic range of wild moorland which I had noted on the map at home and that for thirty odd miles envelops the rich undulations of Lothian. I feel sure that few through-travellers either by road or rail have any idea that the narrow and delectable vale through which they wind for a dozen miles is a pass through the Lammermuirs and that these lofty hills drop into the sea a few miles away in the beetling surf-lashed cliffs of St. Abb's Head. Even in the wane of a dour winter day I remember how it appealed to me. The green meadowy trough below, through which a bright tumbling trout stream urged its wayward course, now on one side, now on the other of the railroad. A little hamlet here and there upon its banks. A bit of russet moorland now and again, peeping out high above the encompassing steeps of hanging woodland and green pasture; a brief interlude, twenty minutes perhaps, utterly unlike any other between London and Edinburgh. I little thought at the time how intimate I was to become with that alluring vale and its troutful stream, both in the near and the far distant future, a mere passing vision of the moment, as it seemed, in a long railway journey through a strange land. Then followed quickly the head of the pass, a narrow strip of peat mosses by the roadside, the steep wall of a grouse moor above and thick foliage all about. But night was falling as the creeping train crossed the watershed and ran down by the gorge of the Pease burn, and when we dropped into East Lothian it was full dark.

I was duly met by my host, as I may thus call him, at Drem and in the two miles' drive to Fentonbarns, my destination, I did not understand two consecutive words of his fluent and vigorous converse, strange now as it seems to me, who for a Southerner came to know and still know the Doric rather exceptionally well. I was familiar enough with the dialect of Devon and Wilts for the best of reasons, but the language of dear old Hugh Bertram fired like cannon shots at me seemed at this first onset like that of altogether another world, as of course it actually was. Even to-day I have seen English friends entirely baffled by the speech of

a Lothian rustic. But their speech of to-day is almost simplicity compared with the utterance of their grandfathers, and Hugh Bertram was a prince of speech even among the grandfathers !

Fentonbarns was then a farm of note in the best-farmed region of Great Britain. It was there at least *primus inter pares*, and certainly a familiar name in the higher agricultural circles of England and even among leading agriculturists on the Continent, partly, perhaps, on account of the personality and position of Mr. George Hope, the occupant. For the whole country was farmed up to the highest scientific level of the day, paying in rent from £3 to £5 an acre and leaving a good margin of profit to the enterprising tenants who had produced such results. Fentonbarns was in area about six hundred acres, and let at £3 5s. an acre on a nineteen-years' lease, the then East Lothian custom. It was a clay loam of average natural fertility, but outside the area of the Dunbar red sandstone belt, the best soil in Scotland, where rents were higher. The Hope family had been there for just a hundred years. The grandfather, working in a comparatively humble way, had begun to bring the land out of the rude and undrained condition common to mid-eighteenth century Scotland, and the son and grandson had perfected it. It was the story, in fact, of many Lothian farms, the story in cameo of Scottish agriculture generally, which, far behind England when George III came to the throne, was as far ahead of it when a younger son was king. Rents had leaped from 5s. to £3, £4 and £5. Scots Lowland lairds, from being too poor to face London society, were drawing rents which made Norfolk or Shropshire look foolish.¹

A fine new farmhouse of red sandstone had recently been built and the old homestead handed over to the steward. Born on the farm, Hugh Bertram had risen from a ploughman to be the trusted right hand and confidential steward and friend, now this long time, of his master. They were

¹ Graham's *Social Scotland in Eighteenth Century*—Laird of Ochtertyre. Autobiography—Scottish Agriculture—Early and Mid-Eighteenth Century—and other Authorities.

the same age, about sixty-five, and of the same mind and skill in their profession. A wonderful pair in truth. The one, the most notable tenant farmer in Scotland, though of quiet and modest manner ; the other beyond a doubt the most remarkable man of his type and station in East Lothian. A man of consuming energy and almost fierce honesty. Yet I doubt if a hasty word ever passed between these two men in their almost life-long association. George Hope, the farmer, of quiet educated Scottish speech, a buyer of pictures, a personage on Boards in Edinburgh unconcerned with agriculture, an intimate friend of leading Scottish editors ; in earlier life a personal friend and ally of Cobden's. "Hughie," as he sometimes affectionately called his faithful servant and colleague of no book learning but the Bible, which he probably knew by heart, of the rugged Doric speech already alluded to and a voice that it was jestingly said would carry across the Firth of Forth. It was in the old farmhouse that I and my companions, of whom a word anon, had our quarters, and we were catered for and generally ministered to by this grand old covenanter, his wife, a dear old woman who remained the peasant she was born, and three daughters, not pretty enough to disturb our peace of mind, but comely looking, youngish women of fair education, practical ability and admirable dispositions.

Under a bright sun and with the long frost still holding, I sallied forth the next morning with abounding curiosity, to take stock of my new surroundings. A change of scene for a year or two in youth assumed, or did in those less restless days assume, such vast importance. Besides, this was Scotland, a fact to which I felt intensely alive. Not the Scotland, to be sure, of the grouse-shooter and the tourist. But even then, somehow, gathered doubtless from much reading of Scott and a curious, half-awakened temperamental sense of the past, I felt somehow that this great sweep of country opened before me was part of the Scotland that most counted. The homestead stood on a broad ridge commanding a considerable slice of East Lothian, and much more besides. For miles in nearly all directions there were

great sweeps of tillage patterned in large rectangular fields, the hedgerows, short and trimmed like garden fences, showing as mere straight lines. There was hardly a tree in the nearer landscape, nor a thicket, nor a patch of waste ground. It was all arable. The rich dark earth at this winter season coloured all the foreground and middle distance, broken occasionally by the faint green of a sprouting wheat field, or intervals of pale stubble not yet ploughed.

Straight, trim, clean, rectangular, I had never seen anything like it. Even in this season of bare frozen earth it gave some sort of prophetic promise of what it must appear in fruition. Red-roofed steadings, planted at intervals about the land, shot tall brick chimneys skyward, some of them a-smoke in evidence that threshing was going forward. For every farm had its fixed engines and machinery and its own steam-plough. No travelling threshing machines nor peripatetic steam-ploughs went round for hire in that country. Beyond this utilitarian but amazing foreground, if so wide an area may thus be called, and about a dozen miles away lay a wild hill country filling the horizon, and from the verge of sight on the west, for I was facing south, to disappear from the picture at its eastern extremity. Romance and mystery seemed here to blend with their very opposite, prose and poetry to make sharp division. For these were no common hills of mean elevation, no mere downs. I could see they were wild grouse moors, if only for the brown patches of heather showing dark even at this distance on their green slopes which caught the sunlight on this clear winter morning. I had not studied the map at home for nothing and I knew, of course, that these were the Lammermuirs. An ardent reader of Scott, *The Bride of Lammermoor*, perhaps rather strangely for a boy, was then, as still, my favourite of all the novels. So somewhere, no doubt beneath that long billowy line of distant moorland, was the House of Ravenswood and the kirkyard that held the dust of the ill-fated Lucy Ashton !

I was absorbed in all these fancies when a tall young man with terriers accosted me. He proved to be Mr. Hope's son,

of an age already to take his part in the affairs of the farm. Incidentally this was the beginning of a friendship which only closed a year or two ago with his death. And, my word, what a change! nay, what a revolution those fifty-six years have witnessed! The pride of great farming, the pride of great landowning, all gone and in the dust. North and South, landlords objects of abuse or compassion, farmers hectored and lectured by politicians and cockneys that hardly know a Hereford from a Shorthorn or a swede from a white turnip.

Yes, those hills were of course the Lammermuirs, and some nearer heights, an isolated upstanding ridge, were the Galton hills with a monumental shaft springing from their summit in memory of that Lord Hopetoun who fought a duel with the Duke of Wellington. Away to the west, some twenty miles distant, rose the couchant Lion of Arthur's Seat, the smoke cloud of Edinburgh visibly hanging about its base and the Pentlands rising high behind. It seemed as if these trim, treeless and rectangular fields stretched all the way there, as in truth they did, though as a matter of fact the woodlands of country houses which really broke their monotony blurred the middle distance. Walking further afield with my new companion, the Firth of Forth but a couple of miles away broke into view with the long coast of Fife and its high, back-lying hills stretching far away into the North Sea. The low but always conspicuous hill of Gullane, with its adjacent village, then of no consequence, lay near by to the left on our own shore, while just ahead was Dirleton with its ruined castle and the woods of Archerfield. Here at Archerfield dwelt the owner, not only of Fentonbarns but of so much high-priced East Lothian land as made him a very big magnate indeed.

We passed the eastern bounds of the farm and through Dirleton, sometimes called the prettiest village in Scotland, which the most perfervid Scot will admit is no very extravagant praise. And so on towards the low-lying shore. I then learned that all this seashore belt, both tillage, parkland and dunes, was an outlying holding of Mr. Hope's. As we

were walking seawards towards it, a steady roaring sound accompanied by rending shouts, almost of agony, issuing from behind a fringe of trees smote upon my ear. "Good heavens, what is that?" said I. "Oh, it's just the curling," replied Hope. "We'll take a look at it if you like." I was of course none the wiser. It is all very well in these days of Switzerland and winter sports, photographs and incessant travel, but in those not one Englishman in fifty thousand had ever heard of "the roaring game." I was much edified when we reached the banks of the curling pond and first set eyes on it. The minister, the schoolmaster (as I learned) and some leading farmers were in those transports of excitement and activity that I imagine can belong only to those few precious ice-bearing days that are snatched from our uncertain winters. One cannot imagine keeping it up on ice rinks available every winter day—and night. And this reminds me, if the parenthesis will be pardoned, that a successor of the elderly divine, who on this occasion was capering about so joyously, was a very notable curler. So much so that in 1902-3 he captained a Scottish team that went out to contend against the various Canadian clubs. I happened to be spending that winter in Canada and with other unregenerates had been vastly amused by the searchings of spirit into which the Ontario churches, voiced by their press, had been driven by the sight of a Presbyterian minister taking a decently joyous part in the convivial banquets which were quite inevitable to any such fraternisations of Scotsmen. Their Canadian equivalents had no understanding of the tolerant, kindly feeling towards a tumbler of toddy and the frank appreciation of a good glass of wine traditional among the older clerics of our two established churches. It caused quite a flutter among the Canadian unco-guid, but all ended splendidly. For by a happy stroke of humour the Scottish team on their departure were given a send off at the Montreal station with a full band singing and playing the familiar ditty from Burns, "We're nae that fou, we're nae that fou," at which all Canada laughed mightily when it opened its paper at breakfast next morning.

The coast just here was lonely enough in those days. We walked over the sandy tillage land which had been stiffened by hundreds of cartloads of clay hauled over the two miles from Fentonbarns by Mr. Hope—for that was the sort of thing the big Scotch farmers sitting under leases did in those great days. But even so there was always the risk of a gale off the sea lifting a newly sown crop of barley, seed and all, and whirling it into space. Just off the low craggy shore the rocky, grass-crowned islands of Fidra, Ebrochie and Lammie gave character to the nearer scene, while far away beyond them the huge mass of the Bass Rock sat further out into the sea. Two or three miles away the sharp-pointed sugar-loaf of North Berwick Law shot straight up for 700 feet out of the flat coast, an uncanny physical excrescence that had been catching my eye ever since I got up in the morning, a noted sea-mark to sailors, and from the land visible over the whole county of East Lothian and beyond.

North Berwick, now a golfing Mecca, famous throughout the world, and a summer resort for prosperous Scots, that long ago extended itself in sumptuous villas for two miles along the coast, was then a little fishing port, where a few rather select Edinburgh people went in summer to play golf upon a nine-hole course. It did not take me long to feel that this was a region worth living in, a country eloquent of all kinds of things besides agriculture, to be explored and realized. My soaking in Scott, both prose and verse, including even *Tales of a Grandfather*, which had survived Cambridge, gave the glamour beyond a doubt to this far-spread panorama of hills and mountains, of sea and shore, encircling the fat fields I had come primarily to study. But to see the sunsets burning crimson behind distant Edinburgh and its dark guardian heights was alone an inspiration. I did not then, of course, realize the full significance of all I saw, but that did not interfere with my dreams, for I felt somehow that it was all there. It aroused my curiosity and as time went on I began to feel for some reason strong interest in Scotland, such as I could never have anticipated,

quite apart from that aspect of it which I had come to study, though that, too, in another sense was interesting enough. I have felt it ever since, and have had a great fancy for Scottish books, historical and good fiction, all my life. I have mentioned more than once that I had a natural bent for history, or perhaps I should say, a strong sense of the past. It has been a great comfort to me throughout life.

I think I made the most of my two years, and if in middle and later life I returned again and often to these parts that had captivated me in youth, though the freshness had gone I was perhaps better equipped in other ways to appreciate them. But I really did carry into life some understanding of the northern kingdom and its people. Furthermore, I found this acquaintance useful in various parts of the world where Scots abound.

In the next day or two, my companions-to-be turned up from their various homes. I was in luck, for three nicer fellows, of about my age or a little senior, than they proved to be, could hardly have been collected. I appreciated this all the more when later on I occasionally encountered some of the specimens that had been sent north to Scottish farms ! Farming in certain circles unconnected with it has been for all time regarded as a suitable occupation for the fool of the family. One can only suppose that these fond parents and guardians are even bigger fools than their wards. Why a business, which above most others, in Great Britain at any rate, needs a good deal of collective and many-sided wisdom and a strong or inborn taste for it, should be selected for idlers and incapables to lose money in, I never could understand. I think this monstrous fallacy has by now pretty well exploded. But Fentonbarns, being a famous place, had been able to exercise discretion in the three or four students accommodated there. I owed my place there to Joe Fosberry, who had been a prime favourite with both family and inmates in the old farmhouse. But the ladies of the new house, of the Hope family, that is to say, who often entertained us at small dances or cards, declared they had never succeeded in getting him within it, or indeed of



GEOGE HOPE OF FENTONBURNS
From the painting in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery



PHILIP (TO-DAY)

seeing anything but his back in the distance the whole year he was there. That I could well understand !

The elder of the trio with whom I was to live on such close and intimate terms, was the eldest son of a North Lincolnshire squire, who owned about 5000 acres of heavy land at the foot of the Wolds, then worth 30s. to £2 an acre. His scheme of life was not a bit that of his kind of those or even of these days. His whole heart was in agriculture. He had won the top honours at Cirencester, and was shortly to take on a 600-acre farm from his father. I cannot say all I should like to say about him, as he still lives. He and his became life-long friends of mine and in our old age we still write to one another. But I can at least say it is a pity that more elder sons did not do likewise. The catastrophies that have overtaken the landed class might at any rate have been mitigated. Philip, as I will call him, was always ready to carry a gun at home and liked a race meeting, but he was first and last a farmer. If a little old seeming and wise for his years, as became a young man of practical aims and a strong sense of duty, he was of amazingly sweet temper and unselfish. Even then he was of a philosophical turn which, when the dreadful days of the 'eighties fell upon North Lincolnshire, served him in good stead, though it could not avert misfortunes that were none of his or Lincolnshire's making.

Billy H——y was also a delightful fellow, cadet of a famous house, whose family characteristics had been so marked a century before that Horace Walpole had pronounced the world to consist of men, women and H——'s. But I don't think Billy's characteristics were the least those of his ancestors, unless it was the gout which, poor fellow, in the very prime of youth and strength while still actually with us, fell suddenly upon him and crippled him for years. I am afraid in his fevered agonies he said things about his illustrious but self-indulgent forbears that would not bear printing. With such a connection Billy was qualifying for a land agent and would have steadied down, I think, into a tolerably good one. But his complaint turned him into

a planter in the tropics, and twenty years later I found him in London cheery as ever, no richer but on his way to spend the rest of his life as Consul at a well-known French port. That was in the days when consulships were jobs given to impecunious, inexperienced, but (sometimes) deserving relatives.

Larry, too, was the eldest son of a squire, but an Anglo-Irish squire in one of the midland counties of the distressful country and of comparatively small but most beautiful estate, which they had held since William III, with whose forces they had come in from Yorkshire. He, or rather, at that time his father, was also agent for the large property of an absentee in his own county as well as for the English estate of the same owner. Larry was qualifying automatically as his rather elderly widowed father's right hand and successor. He had an abounding sense of humour and a strain of sentiment from his mother, who was of the old Irish stock, curiously blended with the sound sense and shrewd head of his father. He had grown up at home steeped in everything that concerned the land, with hunting, shooting and fishing *ad libitum*. Though the application of the Lothian system to an average estate in Ireland was even more futile than to one in Lincolnshire, an idea prevailed that some useful things might be picked up, and perhaps they were. At any rate East Lothian agriculture was extraordinarily interesting, particularly for young men like these already experienced in other and less ambitious methods. Whatever its practical value to Larry, his presence completed our little group to perfection. Each of us brought some different experience into the common stock and no friction ever marred our thoroughly harmonious intercourse.

Nowadays the study of agriculture is carried on either at an agricultural college or doing practical work with a farmer or a course of both, if those concerned are wise, and this no doubt is the best plan. We merely followed and watched operations from day to day, taking notes and so forth, and when we felt like a change of scene and operations, took it, which was all very nice and interesting. For myself,

though used to country life in the West of England, the routine of a great farm was quite a new experience. It was then generally regarded as part of the curriculum in a land agent's training, and I was not yet qualified to realize how much or how little it amounted to. If I had misgivings as to its ultimate value as time went on I put them aside and persuaded myself that at least it was an experience of life out of the common ruck, which would come in useful some day. If it did not much serve the particular purpose it was intended to, it served others most admirably. And as my lines were ultimately cast in unexpected places, for which no home experience would avail anything, there was nothing to regret.

The reader, I feel sure, will not stand too much agriculture. English people are said to be fond of country life, but I fancy it is its amusements rather than its main industries which attracts most of them. But this great farm almost reached the sublime. It went like clockwork. Its fields, of from 20 to 30 acres, were all rectangular. There were no odd corners, no thickets, no hedgerow trees, no ragged, any-shaped pastures. The quickset hedges were clipped low and narrow like those of a garden. No wild rose or old man's beard rambled on them, no May or black-thorn blossom lit them up, neither did the violet or the primrose find a lodging beneath their shade. There were no open ditches, and the plough ran right up to the roots of the fence. The land was as clean as a well-kept garden, and the whole farm subsoil drained with tile pipes. There was not an acre of permanent grass. I do not think there was one in the whole county, outside the lairds' policies (parks) or the hill country, but only the clover and rye grass which came in rotation in the six-course shift. One shift was always potatoes, 50 to 80 acres with us, the then famous Dunbar Regent fetching the highest price in the London market for roasting at the popular steak and chop houses. The stuff put under the potato crop would make a Sussex farmer gasp. Forty loads of barnyard manure, and 900 lbs. of artificials to the acre, I see by my old journals,

though this may have been the Scotch acre, about one-fifth larger than the Imperial measure, as both were in use there.

And then the wheat crops that followed the potatoes, six and even seven quarters to the acre : I have seen eight ! I remember Mr. Hope selling one potato crop at £50 an acre in the ground, the buyer both lifting and shifting it. Potatoes were and are, however, a bit of a gamble. Damp and close weather in early autumn for a fortnight or so caused tremors throughout East Lothian, and does still, and then perchance came that ominous whiff betokening disease. Fine pairs of Clydesdales with brisk Scotch hinds in the plough stilts behind them ran long clean furrows eight or nine inches deep. Steam ploughs were then in fashion with advanced agriculturists, though in later days they became unpopular for technical reasons not here relevant. There was not only our own steamer constantly at work in the ploughing season, but the smoke of half a dozen others would be generally visible from the farm.

I daresay there were twenty or more men engaged on the place, all living in the low, one-storied, red sandstone, tile-roofed cottages of the country, always grouped around the homestead (to borrow an English term), as is customary on both sides of the Border. No long walks from distant villages worried the Scottish labourer. Wages were then paid partly in kind, the use and keep of a cow being a valuable item, and so many yards of potatoes in the field crop another. Porridge being in those days the staple though not sole diet of the labourer, the milk supply was of immense benefit, above all to the children. As a matter of fact oatmeal was not of ancient use in South-Eastern Scotland. Pease bannocks in the eighteenth century and perhaps later had been the basic food, nourishing but nasty by universal repute. Oatmeal disappeared unfortunately from the Scottish labourer's table long before the great war, and home-baked bread went the same way. The cow and the milk was commuted for cash allowance. Tea and anaemic baker's bread and the grocer's cart with tinned stuff took

their place when wages in 1914 were still about 22s. a week. At the time I write of, the total weekly value was reckoned at about 14s., and a house rent free. They were strong, well-grown men, these Lowland hinds, no better or more faithful workers ever existed.

We knew them all, of course, and watched them at their various jobs on most days. They had not courtly manners ; they neither touched their hats to nor even sir'd Mr. Hope himself, but they were then about the best farm hands in the world. Unlike the town artisans and the middle classes, including most of the farmers, they drank very little. The ale-house and its village parliament did not exist for the Lothian labourer, and whisky even then was for him an expensive luxury. He was well educated, too, in all the rudiments. The sons of the minister and the big farmers sat as boys on the same bench in the Dirleton school beside their future servants till old enough to proceed to the Edinburgh boarding schools. The East Lothian lairds were mostly too big to submit their offspring to the village domine and his impartial tawse as the smaller lairds elsewhere were then wont to do. Apart from the chastisement it was hardly a good preparation for Eton ! The village school-master everywhere was of superior class and education to his English equivalent. Our local domine was on social terms with the big farmers. A little New Year's dinner at Fenton-barns proved a bit too much for him, I remember, for he was reduced to asking where he was at the shepherd's cottage two hundred yards off at six the next morning, having groped round the parish all night ! But occasional slips of that kind were treated as a mere joke in those days and in no wise as a scandal.

The head shepherd had one brother, a Fellow of S. John's, Cambridge, and another a master at Cheltenham College. He himself was a splendid type of man physically and mentally, and it was a sight to see him in the straw sheds handling his large flock of Border Leicesters in the lambing season. But in recalling the labour of this and all such farms it would be ill forgetting the women workers or

"bondagers," for they were as numerous as the men and of great importance. We had at least a dozen local bondagers, wives, daughters and sisters of the men, and as many more immigrant girls from the Western Highlands who came for about half the year and were lodged in bothies. Whether Gaelic or local, however, these women were mostly Amazons with the faces of a harvest moon and the muscles of a prize fighter. They were part of the farming system over much of the Lowlands and Northumberland. Their wage then was about a shilling a day, but had doubled by 1914, while the number employed had much decreased, and their physique obviously declined owing, it was said, to the disuse of porridge and milk. They had begun to think about their complexions, too, and chewed rice to modify the gorgeous hues thereof, just as they eschewed porridge to the sapping of their splendid strength. It is odd that this nourishing food should have become so popular with all classes in England just as it was being rejected by the lower class in Scotland as their wages rose, for reasons which must, I am afraid, be set down to snobbery. "Farm servants," as the Scots phrase went, were then taken on at the hiring fairs, and those had most chance who could bring a woman worker with them, wife, daughter or sister. These were included in the yearly agreement or bond, hence the term "bondager."

These Amazons did every kind of farm work except where the horse came into it. In threshing times they ran up ladders with sacks of wheat that would have broken the back of a Rugby "forward." They wore a uniform costume of straw bonnet with an "ugly" such as ladies used in the 'fifties, a pink neckerchief, blue blouse, linsey-wolsey skirt to the knees, woollen stockings and hobnailed boots. All the grain crops were hand-hoed in the drills and the Highland girls, who could not speak English and worked in a gang with a grieve looking after them, made a picturesque sight on the fresh green of the young wheat or barley field. Shrrill cries as from a flock of excited seagulls would burst from them anon, announcing that some joke was going forward, and we understood it was the regulation laugh of the

Hebridean fair. But the dour old grieve did not stand too much cackling, and as he could not comprehend a word they said, no doubt he was often the subject of their uncalled-for mirth and weird screams.

They had an awkward custom, these Amazons, if you were not on the look-out for it. For there was some particular date connected with the close of harvest when they claimed the privilege of tossing any young man they could catch unprotected, irrespective of class, in a rick cloth. An unfortunate friend of mine who was merely on a visit to the farm was thus kidnapped and sent several times nearly up to the roof of the barn amid the shrieks of the Gaels, the screams of the Lothian lasses and the applauding shouts of the men spectators. He was an Oxford Honours graduate, who rather fancied himself, owned a manor and two thousand acres of fine grassland in Somersetshire, was a J.P. and of slightly Pickwickian build with a touch of Pickwickian simplicity. This only increased the joke, of course, for us, though we were deprived of the spectacle from mere motives of self-preservation, but there was no lack of reporters of the dramatic scene. It was a sore point with the victim. He never alluded to it then or afterwards. When seeing him as I used to sometimes, surrounded by admiring sisters and looking out over the peaceful Somersetshire scene, I have wondered what these devoted and also slightly Pickwickian ladies would have said if they had been vouchsafed the vision of the adored Alfred exploring the rafters of a Scotch barn under such outrageous circumstances.

You could not tip those old-time Scottish labourers. It was a deadly insult, though a change in this with other lapses from grace came about before the war. I was once involved in a dreadful transaction of this kind. A man I knew well left his plough as I was passing and walked towards me. I supposed he wanted a match. Not a bit of it ! He proffered me a halfpenny : "I'd be obliged if ye'd gie this tae Maister and say I've nae need o't." This was my revered and correct friend Philip from Lincolnshire. He had added insult to injury. Having held the man's plough for a furrow

or two, he proceeded to ‘ pay his footing ’ according to the custom of the South, and worse still had mistaken a half-penny for a shilling and being of a rather bashful nature had stalked away before the recipient had recovered from his astonishment and indignation.

CHAPTER V

FENTONBARNES AND ROUND ABOUT

THE winter passed pleasantly away into the fierce east winds of spring that sweep this north-east coast with pitiless rigour, though little we recked of that in our lusty light-hearted youth. The siege of Paris was dragging slowly along and the Prince of Wales nearly died of typhoid. There was Edinburgh, too, to see, with an occasional theatre, and now and then a party was made up by the Hope ladies to the Assembly balls. Then there was market day at Haddington, six miles away, at that time the first grain market in the North, to which flocked farmers from all over the county and buyers from a far wider area ; the older men in broughams or waggonettes, the younger in smart dogcarts. The sample sacks, untied a-top, standing upright in long rows all down the large market hall, made a fine display, and behind each stood a farmer or his steward, while the buyers moved up and down the rows. Wheat in those days never sank to an unprofitable figure, that is to say below 40s. a quarter, then generally quoted as the minimum price with any profit in it. At this time it ran between 50s. and 60s. Serious competition from abroad had not begun. Little did our British farmers then dream that within a decade the whole fabric of the British landed system, its pride, its absolute security, would begin to crack.

And when the sales were over, there was the well-attended " Ordinary " at *The George*, and the less formal snacks at other hostelries. But above all, throughout the day was the clinking of glasses, the little gill measures of whisky, amid clouds of tobacco smoke and a babel of voices from

hearty strong-lunged men in roomy chambers dedicated to conviviality. Bargains were there consummated, jokes cracked and stories told and coins rattled on the tables to decide who should pay for each fresh tray of glasses with which rosy-cheeked lasses pushed through the crowd. Here and there might be seen an agricultural student, son of some big farmer or squire from the South, in the cord breeches and gaiters affected by all the smarter type of young men concerned with farming and by no one else in those days outside the hunting field. Here and there, too, was a young Danish or Swedish Count, sent over to sit at the feet of some Lothian farmer, equally sporting in attire and, like the others, often taking a bit too kindly to the "custom of the country." It must be admitted, however, that the ordinary whisky of those days was the sort of stuff that even thirty years later could hardly have been purchased for money.

We now go to school with the Danes, though I do not think the Lothians need to do so. But Denmark in those days was in a parlous state which its recent struggle against Austria and Prussia and resultant loss of territory did not help to mitigate. Such of these young Danes as had fought in the war used to tell us that it was the Austrian not the Prussian army that they had dreaded—strange hearing nowadays! Nor did they make any secret of being as they thought let down by England. The story of the almost heroic reconstruction of her internal affairs, mainly agricultural, and her rise to be in that respect the model of the world, has, I should imagine, no parallel in the history of economics. I made some acquaintance myself with several young Danes and Swedes then in East Lothian. They were much like well-to-do young Britons, not merely in appearance but in ideas and habits. Indeed I occupied the room at Fentonbarns just vacated by the son and heir to about the largest property in Denmark and of the family that stood, I believe, nearest to the throne in that country. The "Count" had been a universal favourite for a year in that simple household and the keen interest he took in the farm had left a deep impres-

sion on his shrewd and rugged host, to whose words of wisdom when he had mastered the Doric he had given unfailing attention. Nor do I think the fact of his being a personal friend and sometimes guest of Alexandra, then Princess of Wales, made a particle of difference to the respect in which old Hugh had held him.

But none of these confident, cheery, deep-pocketed Lothian farmers could have guessed the fate that was hanging over them and their kind, men and families of well-known name in Scottish agriculture who in little over a century, by their enterprise, had brought the Lothians from a backward, poverty-stricken country to be the very model for all others and lifted their class from small labouring farmers to capitalists of secure and comfortable life. Ten years later the pride of prosperity and pre-eminence still beat as high as ever in East Lothian. And then, suddenly, as it seemed to all British farmers, though they might well have foreseen it, the grain of the virgin lands from overseas burst upon the country like a flood. Wheat fell rapidly from its old comfortable consistent figures of fifty and sixty shillings to thirty odd, with oats and barley to match. This, alas, was no temporary set-back, such as in a less extreme form and from other causes had often happened and could be easily weathered. It had come to stay, and not even to stay at that but to drop gradually down to about 20s. the quarter and at some dire moments to worse even than that.

What, then, was left to a country that nature had created for growing grain, and that for a hundred years had been carefully nursed at vast expenditure into performing this invaluable service more abundantly to the square mile than any region in Europe? All the tillage counties in England simply crumpled up. Farmers disappeared by the hundred, farms were unlettable, land unsaleable, even mortgagees at their wits' end. British land that had been immemorially regarded as the most secure investment upon earth, with interest in rent as regular as Consols, save in spots, became the most hopeless of all forms of property. From envied security landowners dropped into a position that

when unsupported by outside wealth seemed financially untenable—and was so. The high condition of Lothian land and its skilful management helped that country to weather in some sort the two dismal decades of the 'eighties and 'nineties, while the great potato crop, being outside foreign competition, was a further support. But all the great farming families with a few exceptions disappeared, not necessarily ruined, though much money was lost. But the younger generation took their business capacities into other callings, that was all. On revisiting this country, after twenty and odd years' absence, I found that nearly all the old names had gone. The high standard of farming had carried on, but for many years at what a price no one will ever know. And then new men had come in, a rather different class, or perhaps a more varied one. Hard working grieves who had saved money, merchants' sons with capital ready to risk for a Lothian farmer's life, which had always in the past, like English gentleman farming, a glamour for the cities and even a touch of social attraction. And then things got better, till the War, after which date I have nothing to say, for I know nothing. Agriculture may or may not prosper in the future, but neither in Scotland nor in England will the days which ended, speaking broadly, with the 'seventies ever return. Only those of us who were mixed up with such things and are old enough to remember those days can fully realize the profound security and solidity then associated with the landed interest.

As a date 1879 means nothing now, save to a few, though 1815 and 1834 (the Reform Act) are engraved on history. But 1879 nevertheless marks the end of all that land had hitherto stood for, or, if you like, the beginning of the end. The Reform Bill only let in the merchants, who hastened to be squires in name and deed as fast as they could. If the squires had lost political power the prestige of land suffered nothing. Eighteen seventy-nine was merely the most disastrous farming year within living memory. That in itself would be comparatively nothing and mark no epoch. But it knocked farmers flat for the moment, and before they

could get up again the first wave of the deluge from overseas met them in the face. A year or two later the fat was in the fire and men began to understand where they were—landlords slowly and bitterly to realize what they had mostly forgotten for at least a century, namely that they were in actual fact farmers, if sleeping partners like the men who did the farming for them, not the receivers of just so much an acre in cash, slowly rising for the past three or four generations. It was almost pathetic to read in the papers of well-meant rebates of 15 or 20 per cent on the year's rent by Lord A. or Mr. B. Of what earthly use, when wheat was below 30s., with barley and oats to match, and from causes that had obviously come to stay, with every prospect of aggravation?

As our manufacturers had then no rivals, Free Trade to them meant nothing. The abolition of the Corn Laws in 1838, so dreaded by our farming interest, had so far meant practically nothing to farmers. For Europe had been distracted with wars, America distraught with years of civil strife, and transportation in its infancy. She had now recovered and was setting her house in order and developing the virgin West at a rapid pace. Her Eastern states were already by 1880 being deluged with Western produce. Prices for wheat and maize had dropped 100 per cent. Eastern farms had lost half their freehold value. New England, thriftily cultivated by a home-staying population for two hundred and fifty years, was throwing up the sponge, farmers selling their ancient homesteads cheap and even leaving them derelict and going West by thousands. Pennsylvania farmers on fine, well-farmed lands, hitherto worth £30 or £40 an acre, were finding the competition with cheap prairie lands too much for them. Maryland and Virginia, struggling along with their freed slaves with fair success and hope after the ruin of war, were thrown back again for years. Nobody in England noticed all this or seemed able to read the writing on the wall. America was then outside the purview of most Britons, particularly of farmers, country squires and family solicitors. Cheap ocean

carriage was not yet fully organised. The superabundant produce was for the moment held up in the Atlantic States or being burned for fuel on the prairies by the growers, but it was coming over soon enough. A moderate duty on corn, sufficient to keep wheat at the moderate figure of 40s., might have staved off the crash, for crash it was, and possibly kept grain cultivation going till the Great War. But as everybody knows the manufacturers wanted cheaply fed labour, while the politicians of this trade-ridden country had their shibboleths, and for most of them the figures of the grain market as opposed to cost of production were and still are meaningless.

I have dwelt rather fully on the blow dealt to the whole structure of British agriculture by the Western and, indeed, other overseas wheat fields in the 'eighties, for the good reason that I was farming my own land in one of the old states of America at this very period and had only too good cause to know the situation there. It was obvious that Great Britain without Protection would very quickly find herself in the same parlous state. In '77 or '78 I was revisiting East Lothian as well as other counties. The great machine was running then as smoothly, unsuspiciously and proudly as of old. There was not a whisper of the coming blast. But to me it appeared so plain, indeed almost too plain to be worth discussion. And yet it seemed hidden from the people at home, the very wisest of them, and who was I to tell a crack East Lothian farmer that in four or five years he would be cursing his nineteen-year lease, the very anchor-sheet of the great East Lothian system; or my friends in Essex that their fat wheat lands at £2 an acre would soon be derelict, as in truth they actually became?

But we must get back to the halcyon days before these things were even looming on the horizon and the old regime was only entering the last decade of its existence. Quite a different condition of things and of atmosphere for landlords, let me state, from the thirty subsequent years of mere "holding-on," with reduced rent rolls which lasted till the War and the further debacle that brought about.

I daresay two-thirds of the Lothian farmers in the old days were Liberals. But what did this amount to? Free Trade certainly, for not a breath of its significance, from temporary causes already alluded to, had yet touched either farmer or manufacturer to break their faith in it. As long hours as you please, too, on farm or factory! The workmen in either could go hang as far as the Manchester school were concerned. For it resented interference, nor would any question touching private property have been considered. But the Lothian farmers, whether Liberal or Conservative, did not grumble at paying much the highest rents in Britain. Indeed, I fancy they were rather proud of what they had brought their lands to be worth, seeing that they still made a good living and sometimes much more. They used to say then, as I have often heard Scottish farmers say since, that the inferiority of Southern farming was due to the inadequate rents and lack of incentive to enterprise thereby induced. The particular grievances of Scottish farmers at that time were the law of Hypothec and the ravages of ground game. The former gave the landlord certain prior rights over other creditors which was considered unfair. As to the latter complaint, it was no antagonism to game and sport but to the serious destruction wrought, by hares particularly, in the best farming counties of Scotland and England.

You might count twenty or thirty half-tame hares sitting about any one of our stubble fields at Fentonbarns. Latter-day sportsmen may well wonder what their forbears could have seen in shooting hundreds of hares. The reader may hardly credit that a thousand of them was by no means an unknown item in the day's bag on certain great Norfolk shoots—but it is true all the same. Fentonbarns was covered with hares, and more happily prolific of the harmless partridge, as was inevitable on such land. The shooting was, of course, the landlord's. His habit was to go over it with a large party, perhaps twice in the autumn. Partridge driving was not then practised. Beaters turned out early and drove all the birds and hares into the splendid fields of swedes and turnips and potatoes. The guns then came on

the scene and practically spent the day in the roots, a not very testing nor exacting form of shooting even as regards the birds. But the incidental killing of one or two hundred hares in turnips seemed hardly worth the ill-feeling it created between landlord and tenant. That so futile a custom was maintained in really callous fashion is an illustration, though from the bad side, of the consummate confidence of the landlord interest.

After this had cracked, in the 'eighties, came the Hares and Rabbits Bill. There are plenty of hares, however, left for hunting and coursing, which in a sporting sense is surely what they are best suited for, and enough too in most districts for varying the game bag and supplying the market. But this superabundance of hares did infinite damage to the fine root crops, which were themselves a sight to behold, nibbling as they did at the tubers and letting in the frost and rot. Coursing meetings, too, were held occasionally, the only drawback being the large number of hares. There was no spot to tempt the home-seeking rabbit, so damage from them was nil. One might fancy that even our irrepressible friend the coney had not the audacity to come out and scratch in these trim fields nor attempt to burrow under the meagre hedges.

But if the picture I have attempted to draw of these fat fields may sound in the telling prosaic enough, a region wherein no song-birds found place for nest or refuge, or scarcely a wild flower to seed or blossom, yet the birds from less rigid regions, from seashore or distant moor, would in their season gather in swarms to the feast here provided and give the scene a strange flavour of wild life. Flocks of wild geese from November to March were daily occupants of one or other of the many big fields, secure in the lack of cover for approach by a potential enemy (such as ourselves), and wary beyond belief. Pewits or "Pee-sweeps" as the Scots have it, on drubbing wings filled the air always with their wild complaints. Wood pigeons ("cushiedoos") swarmed on the land more thickly than in almost any region then or since known to me. Small

flights of curlews (whaups) beating across country from the tidal sands of Aberlady to the mud flats of Tyningham, traced themselves against the grey wintry skies. Gulls and crows galore hastened daily to the feast when lines of ploughs were turning up the rich dark soil. As the short daylight faded, and the hinds came jingling home on their plough horses, and the fires of the steam-plough engines were quenched over the land and the Amazons, cackling and joking, came trooping home to cottage or bothy, the prosaic landscape became alive with wild life.

Wild geese loudly honking flew in V-shaped formation to the neighbouring shore, and wisps of golden plover, from heaven knows where, piped through the dusk in shadowy streaks for the same resting place. From above came the occasional whistle of half-seen flighting duck. Partridges would be calling everywhere from the stubbles, and huge flocks of cushats heading for the fir woods along the seashore where they roosted, while the pewits held their wild insistent note till the last crimson speck faded behind Edinburgh and Arthur's Seat in the distant west, and the long trail of the Lammermuirs sank into the night. Not the most ruthless demands of scientific farming in the foreground or middle distance, however, could lessen the appeal of that great sweeping outlook over South-eastern Scotland. Indeed, when the golden glories of harvest lit up these well-nurtured fields for miles with the rich colouring of their unmatched fertility, they alone were a spectacle in themselves. Cobbett went through this country—from the Tweed to Edinburgh—and pronounced it to be the finest, agriculturally, he had ever seen in his life. Cobden had done so, more than once from this very spot, though as every one knows he was a false prophet. "The Western prairies," he declared in Parliament, "would never threaten the British farmer. They were only fit to grow Indians and buffaloes." Better known perhaps, though not so foolish, was his assertion that all Europe would adopt Free Trade. Poets invoke the countryside with fire and passion if not always in harmonious numbers, but I fancy they would rate farming, even pastoral

farming, as a prosaic subject. Queer, too, as it is the very essence and soul humanly and physically of the countryside and even paints it with the very colours that enrapture the poet and artist. At any rate, even in these early days I used to feel something like a thrill as I looked out over the face of East Lothian and a queer sort of pride in being even temporarily associated with such triumphs of agriculture.

The central figure in our little company was our actual host, old Hugh Bertram, old, that is to say, as he then seemed to us. The privilege of housing and boarding us in the old farmhouse was assigned to him as an addition to his salary by his employer. We had our private living-room, but the old man always took the head of the table in the dining-room to our enormous edification, not merely on account of his sterling character and quaint sayings and humours, but for the words of agricultural wisdom that dropped naturally from the lips of a man whose whole life was steeped in it. His Doric was above price and as sometimes happened with a Scotsman of his type, whose mental vitality had outstripped his educational advantages, he coined words of his own which became precious in our ears. In short, he improved even on the Doric. He had some splendid words and when they came out, though none of us moved a muscle, we treasured the hearing of them. So did even his own daughters, and with them we used to mingle our mirth over "father's words;" I wish I could remember them! One or two might have been added to the language with advantage. "A maist *countermanery* mon" is pretty good for a disobedient, argufying person. It would be ill-taste even now to quote the phrase with which this grand old man used invariably to conclude his long grace before meat, but no living soul either in or out of his family was ever known to grasp its meaning. I wish I could remember more of his general vocabulary, but the present moment only too poignantly reminds me that he always called influenza "invalenzy," surely the more euphonious term of the two.

He was almost fierce in his honesty and his energy. Never in his long life as a servant had he permitted himself



"LARRY," 1880

"HUGH," 1871

a moment of idleness in his employer's time, intimate as was their relationship. His inflexible integrity was felt all over the farm. Awe was certainly an element in his authority. I have already spoken of his voice, which would carry half over the farm, and he wore a piercing whistle that would carry further even than his voice. When he appeared at the gate of a 30-acre field, the cackle of the bondagers ceased abruptly with a "Whisht, yon's Hugh," and a dozen poke bonnets bent over their Dutch hoes as they pushed them with renewed zeal along the wheat drills. The ploughman halting for a moment at the head-rigg grasped his plough handles, swung his team round into the furrow and gee-hawed away for his life when he heard that voice two fields away. "Mon, d'ye no ken yer a thief!" the old man would shout to some hedge-clipper caught loitering unawares, and the astonished, slow-moving mind had no time for asking an explanation before it came. "Y're takin' yer maister's siller an' stealin' his time." This was not truculence, and no one took it as such. He believed it thoroughly and applied it to himself with absolute rigidity. His moral code was austere. More than one unmarried couple on the farm had found themselves man and wife owing to his prompt action, whether they liked it or not, and with surprising celerity.

And yet Hugh Bertram was the kindest of men. His grey eyes would twinkle with fun beneath their bushy brows as he launched his jokes, with no particular respect for persons but with not the faintest flavour of coarseness, a nicety that would have been far to seek among his social superiors—the farmers. He had travelled a little, too, apart from the Border shows, which were of course a joy and delight to him, though seldom enough indulged in. Men who had known and appreciated him, had in fact sat under him and had come to farm farms or own estates, used to ask him to visit them on those rare occasions when he permitted himself a few days' holiday. His reminiscences of these jaunts were of undying interest to himself and an infinite treat to his hearers. Still greater treat must it have been to tramp over Lincolnshire fields or even Irish pastures

(one memorable visit) with him in the flesh and hear his scathing comments, mixed maybe with scraps of very faint approval. For he had a general contempt, with a few reservations, for all agricultural ways south of the Tweed. And in truth who could blame him when he found land as good in natural quality as his own everywhere paying about 30s. rent. Bad farming absolutely pained him. In his own phrase, it made him "purely seek" (sick).

On Sunday mornings he repaired with his wife and family to the U.P. Church in North Berwick, four miles distant, taking dinner along and eating it on the seashore between services. After that he brought the minister back with him and spiritual exercises filled their evening in the kitchen. Theology, however, was abandoned on Monday morning and the results of his strenuous Sabbath showed themselves in the best and most practical shape throughout the week. One or other of us generally accompanied him in his daily rounds of the farm. Going round the straw yards, where the bullocks were fattening and paying their way mainly by the mountains of manure hauled out in the spring, was of course instructive. But when a sick beast had to be vetted Hugh was at his greatest. Nearly always from an ample diet of turnips and cake the trouble was obstruction and stomachic. He had a terrible long instrument for these ailments known as a probang, which he sent yards down a bullock's throat. In the hubbub of bringing the protesting and unwieldy patient into position for the operation, Hugh's directing voice rose high above the storm. And when the dread instrument had been plunged into the animal's interior and withdrawn after a successful voyage, the old man would step back a pace, regard his patient for a moment or two, then throw up his hands and exclaim in stentorian tones, "Aye, but that's graand, jes' graand." What the bullock, as he staggered back into a normal attitude, thought of it one may not know, as he could not use his just released tongue for enlightening us.

Nor, returning to the midday dinner table for a moment, must the "sword bayonet" be forgotten. For the veteran

had a carving knife of most fearsome proportions, and when excited by narrative or argument, he would wave the long blade over the joint before him and make passes in the air most disconcerting to the nerves of his immediate table neighbours. Hence its soubriquet. Once I remember in practising this unconscious sword-exercise he sliced a bit off his left hand with which he was also demonstrating, and had to leave the table for a bandaging operation. But it did not cure his sword exercise. Our menage was simplicity itself. A sit-down tea of the ample Scottish kind, a cold supper at nine, a barrel of beer always on tap. None of us drank much whisky, which is only worth mentioning as a sign of the period. Young Englishmen of normal habit did not drink spirits. I never saw whisky at Cambridge, though wine, good and bad, was abundant, while fast men imbibed brandies-and-sodas.

But we were in bounding health, out of doors all day in this super-bracing climate, and rather prided ourselves, I think, on being superior to all luxuries. We read *The Field* on Sundays and the *Scotsman* was our daily pabulum, particularly the sporting and farming news. Even I, with always a taste for them, rarely opened a book, for which I have even now no particle of regret. I was picking up much more than books could ever have taught me, quite apart from the farm, though to express such acquirements in terms of words would have been impossible. Indeed, I was never wholly free from a feeling that I might be wasting my time, though always a something at the back of my mind was whispering that I was not, and whatever instinct that may have been was right or lucky. But I wish I had known it. It would have relieved me of the only weight that sat upon my mind, however lightly. For I had my career to make. It was not awaiting me like that of my friend Larry in Ireland or of Philip in Lincolnshire, whose respective lots I vastly envied.

Billy was in my position. But then his wide connection among the governing families of the country seemed to justify the incurable optimism of that cheery soul, though

he never hinted at his advantage in that respect. If in those light-hearted days he had been told that he would end his days as H.M. Consul at an important Continental port, he would have been surprised, but nothing like so much as I, had the curtain of the future been lifted and revealed that trip of mine to Neville's Court, and a good many other more or less similar expeditions. At the moment the only book I ever took up was that fine old Scottish classic, *Stephen's Book of the Farm*, a really delightful work and quaintly illustrated with Lowland farming scenes in black silhouette, and admirably written. We played cards in the evening, such round games as Loo and Nap that in those days were popular all over the country with both youth and age, from University undergraduates to East Lothian farmers. Sometimes our Swedish and Danish acquaintances came over and took a hand. Pleasant fellows, speaking English well and, as I have said, very carefully tailored like gentlemen farmers of the period.

The Danes, I imagine, have mostly parted with their estates to their old tenantry, those amazing small farmers who now lead the world. As to the Swedish proprietors, an East Lothian expert who knows their country tells me that they farm their comparatively small estates and do extremely well with them, and that the agriculture of Southern Sweden is a picture to behold. So perhaps these young nobles who used to drop into the Lothians in the 'seventies carried away more than we may have thought. How many English squires are there who could have taken up 1,000 acres even in good times and farmed it profitably. Perhaps one in fifty! Indeed, it has always been an accepted axiom that such a procedure means a loss. This surely has been a weak spot in our otherwise admirable landed system.

After his supper with us, Hugh held short family worship with his wife and daughters in the kitchen and one could hear even through closed doors the good old man's fervent supplications. He then went instantly to bed, and the scene in the roomy old kitchen underwent a transformation and became one of tempered hilarity. For it was the tradi-

tion of this simple household that such of the "young gentlemen" as cared to should spend the last hour of the day smoking in the kitchen. There the old lady established herself with her knitting in the chimney corner and the girls with theirs, the day's work done, dropped into the customary places. The senior among us by prescriptive right settled down into "father's" big arm-chair, and then there was much merriment, joking and chaffing in Scots and English, all in the best of humour and with a perfect understanding of a situation that no one would have dreamed of abusing, even had the old lady not been nodding over her needles in the chimney corner and the old hero slumbering profoundly through it all in a chamber actually opening out of the kitchen. My old Durham friend, Joe Fosberry, during all the months he spent here had characteristically established a record by not once putting his nose inside the kitchen door.

The landlord of Fentonbarns and of perhaps ten times as much again in the county was the Rt. Hon. Christopher Adam Dundas Nisbet-Hamilton. As a matter of fact these estates were his wife's, which, added to his own elsewhere, made him one of the wealthiest landowners in Scotland. He was a Dundas of the Melville family, had formerly sat in Parliament for either Edinburgh or Mid-Lothian, and married Lady Mary Bruce, a daughter of Lord Elgin and half-sister of that well-known Intimate of Queen Victoria's, Lady Augusta Stanley. How Lady Mary became possessed of this noble estate through the re-marriage of her mother, and how her husband came to assume the name of Nisbet-Hamilton is rather intricate and here irrelevant. The latter had formerly been in the Conservative Ministry, and in the impudence of youth I used to ask myself and even other people why. I only discovered the true reason the other day in the published letters of some contemporary statesman, Sir James Graham, possibly! There it appears that his not very conspicuous office, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, was allotted on the tacit understanding that being wealthy and his wife very much of a *grande dame*, he should do the

dinner giving for the party. The secret was out at last, and my precocious opinion was not so wide of the mark. As to the dinners, I can well believe that this distinguished couple had served their party well in London, from the rather ceremonious sumptuousness with which in their old age they entertained their many guests at Archerfield, the large plain mansion of the estate to which Fentonbarns and many other such farms belonged. Their second property was that of Biel, near Dunbar. Through connections that matter nothing here, I was occasionally invited to Archerfield for short visits. They bored me dreadfully, I fear, but there was no escape, living only two miles away, even had I wanted to shirk them, and I was never at any time averse from fresh experiences. For this was no ordinary country house. It was essentially a great house in a social sense. Externally it was rather dreary of aspect, standing in level, sparsely timbered park lands, merging into sandy links and long belts of fir wood stretching to the shore, while the lodge gates gave out on to the ornate village of Dirleton with the great ruinous castle and its charming grounds. Anything more different from the atmosphere of a modern English country house and its guests than the formality and ceremony of this particular Scottish mansion in those old days could not be conceived. Of some twenty guests on each of my visits, nearly all were middle-aged or elderly. There were no young people and no amusements, as it was outside the shooting season. But I was greatly interested all the same, for I had been in the country nearly a year by that time and had got the measure of it fairly well. All these people were big Scottish landowners mainly from the Lowlands. I could "locate" most of them and many bore names the significance of which in Scotland I was beginning to realize. It is strange nowadays to think of a house like this without bathrooms, still more without a smoking-room. Of course no one then dreamed of smoking in dining-rooms over their wine. At night, even here the men descended into the kitchen among the black-beetles, as was the usual custom then in more modest houses.

There were no "fads" in all this. The hosts were of the great world to their finger tips.¹ As a young and inexperienced Southerner, it seemed strange to me, I remember, that though every guest was from north of the Tweed there was nothing Scottish about them externally, or anything at all in common with the people outside. Eton, Oxford, the Guards, and successive London seasons, do not produce the Scots laird of the story books and the stage, the kindly, simple soul, the father of his even simpler people, who says "whatefer" and "the noo." There may be such in the North and West, but there were none of that sort in the Southern counties by the 'seventies.

Unquestionably there had been plenty of "braid Scots" talked by their grandfathers and grandmothers, but these were other days. The "braid Scots" was all outside the park gates by this time, with the farmers, doctors, lawyers, ministers. But the landed gentry might almost have been Kentish or Yorkshire squires for all outward sign or trace of the Scot about them. Of course the whole thing was inevitable and understandable. Still it seemed to mark a certain artificial cleavage between landlord and tenant such as did not exist in England. Both classes, too, were intensely proud. Any way the quasi-feudal yet cheery, familiar, comfortable social attitude of the bigger English farmers and their landlords seemed here as a rule lacking. The connection was much more commercial. I saw a good deal later on of a great many Scottish farmers and I never heard one of them express any personal attachment to his landlord, though their business relations might be perfectly satisfactory, and the business relation was the beginning and end of it all. There was no social contact whatever. The tenant of Fentonbarnes and his family were quite cultivated people, but a call once a year merely as to a tenant on the estate was the limit of personal interchange. Social lines in these counties were absolutely rigid. For one thing pro-

¹ In Lady Augusta Stanley's recently published letters there is a good deal about Archerfield in the 'sixties, its stiffness of ceremonial is there hinted at, and the writer alludes to her half-sister, Lady Mary, as the typical *grande dame* of her day.

perties were large, and still more perhaps they were all in the hands of the old families. There were no *novi homines* holding land. They would have had a pretty bad time of it, I am sure.

There seemed to be no general entertaining at all, no summer gatherings such as went on in a Southern county, no garden parties, no cricket of course, nor yet archery nor croquet parties ; lawn tennis was not yet invented. There was no material for such functions, as there were only two classes living in the country, big landlords and big farmers without any point of contact. Judged from a Southern standpoint life for young women in the great country houses must often have been intolerably dull. I never heard of a ball at any of these big houses. For myself it was of no consequence whatever. But as a spectator, going much about the country for a couple of years, it struck me as such a curious contrast to the geniality of English country life, so far as I had seen it, and the easy, friendly mingling of various shades of rural society without any sacrifice of the recognised cleavages. The Lothian farmers and their professional friends, of course, entertained one another as elsewhere—music, dancing and cards. They had not their shooting, naturally, nor, I think, were they ever asked to shoot with their landlords over their own farms.

But returning to Archerfield and this particular landlord, though I believe a kind and just man in his way, his Toryism was of a type that proved too much even for the faith of his fellow-Tories, and what that signified in the Scotland of the 'seventies cannot be expressed in modern terms. We all know that prior to the Reform Bill the English squirearchy had it pretty much their own way, but the Scottish landlords had been absolute. There had always been a public opinion in England, but if memory serves me, there were less than three thousand voters in the whole of Scotland prior to 1834. In these days of flapper voting and government by the counting of noses, such a state of things must seem terrible to those who admire the system. But no country in Europe made such strides as Scotland under these aristocrats



ARCHERFIELD HOUSE

between the '45 and the Reform Bill, which ended their political supremacy. The memory of this monopoly still rankled in the popular mind and when the vote came, all middle-class Scotland went Liberal, and largely remained Liberal till the Great War, though Irish Home Rule made serious inroads on the faith. It became a tradition, an obstinate inheritance of thousands whose instincts and even interests were out of accord with their vote. In truth it is a trite and familiar paradox that Scotsmen vote Liberal because they are so inherently conservative. But the lord of Archerfield and Biel and other lesser estates was a cast-iron Tory. His famous relative, Dundas, as every one knows (to use a conventional but quite inaccurate phrase), held the whole patronage of Scotland in the hollow of his hand for twenty and odd years. Not a laird could get a post for a son, it was said, save through Melville, though I do not know that this did much harm. England, however politically docile, could never have been captured like that.

I think Mr. Nisbet-Hamilton would have thoroughly enjoyed such a rôle had the changed times permitted and he been clever enough, which I doubt if he was. For a few years before this, he had given notice to a large tenant on account of his prominently expressed political opinions, and there was such a row throughout the country that the name of Saddler of Ferrygate (between Dirleton and North Berwick) became familiar in the English press. Unchastened by this lesson, he committed a little later the blunder of his life, and his own party cried to heaven to be saved from their friends. But of this a word in due season. I can see him now with his heavy figure and his obstinate, rather bulldog-looking head and face. However, he was very kind to me and incidentally gave me the run of his beautiful trout stream in the grounds at Biel. At Archerfield, too, I had the great good fortune, from the point of view of "links with the past," of meeting the famous and venerable Lady Ruthven,¹ Walter Scott's personal friend. She must have

¹ This lady had been married before Waterloo. She was a Campbell of Islay, lived many years into the eighteen-seventies, and was noted as a forcible and rather eccentric character.

been a great age. I espied one evening in the large drawing-room a very old lady I had not seen before making mysterious passes towards me with an ebony crutch-stick. She probably knew everybody in Scotland and was naturally at a loss on catching sight of me, and with the liberty of a famous old *grande dame* to a mere lad she was summoning me over to explain myself. But a neighbour saved my blushes, and the old lady was most urbane. I did not know then of her friendship with Scott or should certainly have ventured the subject, though she frightened me a little. I remember that on parting she called out quite loudly, "Now, young man, if ever you want any shooting or fishing, you let me know."

Another celebrity I remember there was the aged Lord Wemyss, the father of that Lord Elcho so well known politically and otherwise in his day, who himself died recently in his 'nineties shooting and golfing to the last. But as a matter of fact this venerable peer, his father, used to ride over occasionally to Fentonbarns from Gosford House on a white pony, encased in high wading boots, with a big beaver hat on his head, and carrying a duck gun. His object on these enterprises was to circumvent the wild geese by wading along under the banks of the watercourse that drained the big fields they usually fed on. I do not remember that he had any more luck than generally fell to us at that game !

There was one daughter only at Archerfield, a young woman, then of about eight and twenty, one of the greatest landed heiresses of her day. That she was very plain-featured I well remember, but she had a reputation for cleverness. There was a great deal of talk throughout the countryside as to suitors : German royalties were said to have serious views on her fortune. But no one could have met her once, without recognising her as a young woman who would settle that question for herself. And she did, but many years after this. The favoured gentleman had nothing particular in the eyes of the world to justify so brilliant an alliance, which produced no offspring. A strong-minded, rather autocratic lady, Mrs. Ogilvie-Hamilton, I think,

remained till her recent death. The gift of judicious management of a great estate in difficult times had apparently been denied to herself and husband. So much, I think, is common knowledge. At her death, as a childless widow, Archerfield being unentailed went to the hammer, while Biel passed to the heir-in-tail, a second cousin.

In the days I write of Archerfield was only known south of the Tweed to such English friends as may have been guests there, among whom was the Duchess of Kent, Queen Victoria's mother, a memorable visit described by Lady Augusta Stanley. But some time before the Great War, seven or eight golf courses had arisen within sight of it. Villas and handsome houses by the score were springing up on its barren sandy fringes around the little village of Gullane, while the once lonely shore between Dirleton and North Berwick was already becoming a long procession of summer residences. The bent-covered lonely wastes where our Dirleton shepherd, another man of parts and a treasure to his master, used to run his black-faced or Cheviot sheep at intervals out of the grass parks, is now partly covered by the famous Muirfield golf course, where the Amateur Championship is occasionally held.

CHAPTER VI IN THE HEART OF THE LAMMERMUIRS

EAST LOTHIAN, as may be imagined, was no riding country. There was no hunting over that deep tillage land, where the only grass fields were rotation seeds and clover. None of us kept a horse, it wasn't worth while. But we were great walkers, and none keener and more enduring on a long tramp than Larry, though as a horseman he had already made his mark in a country where fine horsemen were plentiful.

Nor had we much employment for our guns, the shooting being the landlords'. But our occasionally successful efforts to circumvent the wily geese were not debarred, while the shore shooting, particularly in Aberlady Bay, alive with the cries of hundreds of wild birds, provided occasional diversion.

Through all this winter I had been keeping my eyes on the distant Lammermuirs, for I didn't need to be told they spelled trout. Always, too, I had in mind Sir Walter's great tragedy, and used to wonder which of those distant hollows in the hills brought down the burn at which the ill-fated Master of Ravenswood and Lucy Ashton plighted their troth. None of our locals, however, knew anything definite about the Lammermuirs or their streams. Even the enterprising Larry had let a whole year pass without giving them a thought, for which unaccountable aberration he never ceased to upbraid himself when he realized the opportunities he had thrown away. As for me, my fondness for trout fishing and all its accessories, cultivated from early boyhood in the West of England, was at this time intense, and the prospect of a totally new field of exploration was entralling

Larry caught my enthusiasm. His Irish home was surrounded by trout streams, as in after years I had good cause to know. It is not often that an accomplished all-round sportsman is enamoured of the one sport at which he is weak. But the nicer manipulation of a fly rod had somehow been withheld from Larry, though he was almost as keen as I. A mutual friend given to hyperbole used to declare that he killed his fish by hitting them on the head with his tail fly and stunning them! But trout weren't so particular in those days, and Larry was happily unconscious of his deficiencies and got quite enough fish to keep his love for the sport alive.

It used to be said of a certain type of hunting man in the shires that he spent all the dead season hanging about with a straw in his mouth cursing the summer. Larry wasn't that sort of Nimrod. He would walk miles with a knapsack on his back through what he called a "good country," a wild, free, uplifting sort of country. The Weald of Sussex would have bored him stiff. He had a queer strain of feeling and sentiment concealed under his hard, weather-beaten exterior. He had even walked the Trossachs by himself the year before. He never read anything but Lever and the Waverley Novels—an odd mixture!—and his sense of humour and powers of mimicry, which his home surroundings were well calculated to foster, were enhanced by a face, when at rest, of preternatural gravity. But I am drawing here rather on the future, as we remained fast friends for life, for his life—unhappily not a very long one.

Larry was now only twenty-one and I but twenty, all alive with the vitality and visions of youth.

In due course we gathered authentic news of a troutting river in the heart of the moors, nothing less in fact than the Whiteadder of famous name, even then, to all anglers between Forth and Tyne. There was also, we learned, an inn of sorts upon its banks, and furthermore, that the little station of Grants House upon the main line between Dunbar and Berwick would put us within seven miles of it.

So here, at an early date we found ourselves and in that

very valley of the Eye, just beyond the Pease Pass, which had so taken my fancy travelling North in the past winter.

It was now the beginning of April. In a short hour the train had dropped us into another world from the busy Lothian plain, with its spring scents of fresh-turned earth, of pungent guano and phosphates, its throbbing of steam ploughs, its rattling of horse drills, its screaming seagulls, cackling wild geese, and shrilling Highland bondagers.

We strapped on our knapsacks, and with rods and creels in hand turned into the little village and naturally to its inn, the obvious point of enquiry for our route across the hills—quite a snug little house with accommodation for one or two anglers, before which the little river flashed merrily through the meadows below. We asked mine host if it was preserved.

“ Presairved? No, why wad it be? ”

This was a new point of view for us, particularly as a country house showed itself just down the valley. But I was soon to discover that open waters were the rule in South-eastern Scotland, though they were as full of fish as any preserved streams in the West of England.

We made a note of that inn, and had more than one profitable and pleasant day on the alluring stream which it overlooked.

Forty years later I entered the same house again. The Northern mail trains were thundering past it at long intervals, faster than ever, and the once silent highway was just beginning to hum with motor-cars. But neither passing trains nor even cars seemed to trouble the ancient peace of those bosky glens and that dancing stream.

“ Well,” said I to the successor of my long-ago host, “ how’s the fishing? ”

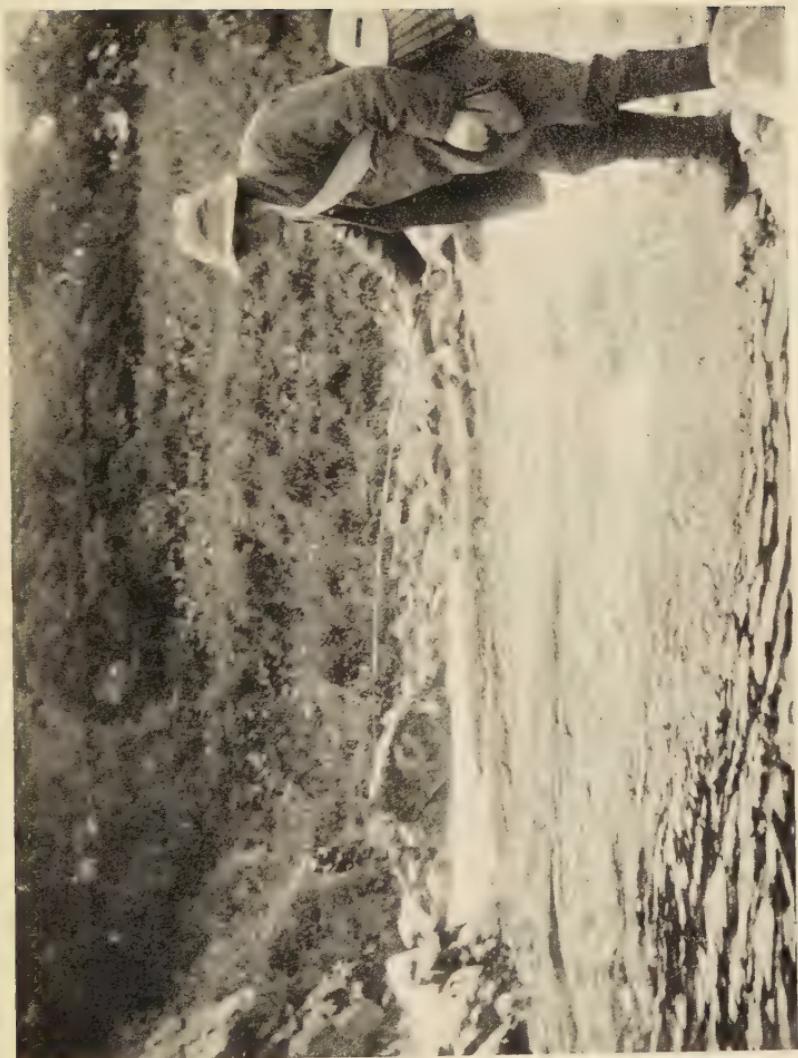
“ Oh, the fushin’s fine,” said he.

“ What still? ” said I.

“ Aye, and why wouldna’t be? Mebbe you’ll have heer’d we’ve got an Association? ”

“ Good,” said I, with various Southcountry clubs in mind, “ And what price are the tickets? ”

THE FUSHIN' CLUB—A COMPETITOR



"A shillin' a year just."

"Good gracious! What do you do with all the money?"
I don't think he detected the pleasantry.

"Aweel, there'll be competeetions and the like o' that,
and then awhiles there's a dinner."

But I found that even the "shillin' a year" was only necessary if you wished to join this Association of decent humble anglers from little Berwickshire towns, compete with them for prizes, and dine with them "awhiles." So I merely paid mine host half a crown for a capital lunch, though venturing the remark that the whisky was not the same article as in the days of old. The publican was frank on that point.

"There's nae doot about that. Whisky like yon canna be got the noo."

So I went out and fished all that summer afternoon down the little stream, trying to recall the once familiar pools and eddies of my youth, and with far less success to recapture youth's sensations. Like the latter the pools and eddies had shifted with the storms of forty winters, while the alders and willows that at intervals dipped their branches in the stream had done still stranger things in forty summers. It added something too to the touch of melancholy—and the music of a stream is terribly reminiscent—inseparable from such re-visitations, when the very fish neglected my flies. I remembered wistfully a particular heavy basket in the long ago, when late snow and sleet storms were plumping, while now, with the added experience of a lifetime, these little trout were laughing at me. But to return to other days.

"Ye're for the Whiteadder?" said this innkeeper of olden time, "And a gran' river it is tae."

That thrilled us mightily, nor were we to be discouraged when he added, "But I'm thinkin' it's gey airy for't yet, It's no for me to say it, but ye'd likely dae a deal better doon here on the burn." So we should have, but both in Southern Ireland and in Devonshire we had each of us been used to catching trout through March, and had somehow overlooked the question of latitude. So with the "gran'

river " seven miles ahead of us we stept out, bearing our burdens lightly and in high fettle.

The Whiteadder was but three miles distant, our prospective inn another four up its valley. A rough farm road carried us over high ridges of half-enclosed moorland, and the homestead of a big sheep farm, to which they pertained, huddled behind a thick grove of wind-battered trees. Beyond it we dropped down into a valley, where through boggy flats prattled the upper waters of the Eye we had just left. Another ascent and another big tree-sheltered homestead, and we passed on to a high bare moorland ridge long since enclosed. We encountered no living soul, and just here three tracks met and puzzled us for the moment. But we were now looking out over miles of brown waving moorland, throwing up here and there bold summits against the skyline, while uneasy grouse, already concerned with cares domestic, were clucking on all sides. " This is a great country," Larry kept on muttering as we stumped along.

It was a clear day, and unhappily for fishing prospects a cold north-east wind had sprung up. But far away, over the brink of this great Lammermuir wild, we espied some high blue hills of mountainous contour sharply cut against the horizon. " The Cheviots," said I, for I knew they could be nothing else. That the whole of the Merse of Berwickshire and the Vale of Tweed lay hidden from us on this side of them I was then but dimly aware. It was all fine and fresh to both of us. The London and Edinburgh expresses were running but a couple of miles behind us, and here we were, as it seemed, on the very roof of the world, looking out into what appeared illimitable and noble solitudes.

So these were the Lammermuirs, of which I had so vaguely dreamed ever since I had first read Scott ! I felt a strange uplifting that I can recall to this day, despite the scores of times I have since looked upon this glorious view both in youth and age. Exmoor had so far stood for these hills in my imagination, and Wolfe's Crag had been perched somewhere beneath the great cliffs about Lynton. But here was the actual country, and if we had turned and looked

back over the line of our walk we should have seen more brown moors heaving up beyond the hidden trough of the railroad towards the sea. I did not yet know that these fell into it in cliffs as grim and sheer as those of Countisbury and Martinhoe, and that "Wolfe's Crag" clung to their face.

Now if this had been in 1927 instead of 1871 some one down in East Lothian would have said, "Want to go to the White-adder? Why, of course, I'll run you up in an hour." All these pleasant little activities, these little mysteries, anticipations and sense of exploration would have been lost in a single, feverish and uneventful hour! I thank my stars such a thing was impossible in those great days.

Few cars ventured these rough hill roads even in 1914, nor did anyone to speak of but fishermen, sheep farmers and the like ever pass within the outer ramparts of the Lammermuirs, either from East Lothian at the north or the Merse and Tweed-side upon the south. I am told, however, that all this is now altered, that roads have been made and the ancient peace of the hills more or less broken.

But when Larry and I stood at the lonely cross-tracks on the moor, at a loss for the moment, nearly two generations were to pass before these things happened. A tumbledown, dreary-looking little house among some trees stood in the corner, and at its door we sought guidance, but got no answer to our knocks. I little thought that out of this decrepit fragment of a house, the lair as we learned of a professional poacher, would some day grow a small shooting box, which after many vicissitudes would at the long last develop into a snug and homely fishing inn, known as "The House on the Moor," and that in comparative old age, when Larry had lain many years in his grave, I should return by mere chance to this very spot and with those near to me spend many unforgettable autumns. The chances and changes of life are in truth strange.

Our route, however, seemed clear enough, for the deep valley of the Whiteadder was now fairly obvious from the fold of the hills, so we headed straight for it across the heather. Suddenly as the high ridge abruptly terminated there

burst upon us a scene at which, I think, we literally shouted with delight. Far below, and coming straight towards us out of the further hills lay a half-mile stretch of broad and shining water, here chafing upon a rocky bed, there spreading into rippling shallows all sparkling with movement in the cold April sunshine which streamed full upon it. It almost took our breath away. For we were enthusiastic anglers, but we were young and our experience limited. I think the beauty of the scene really moved us as much as the promise of its trout. On one side a curtain of oak woods, still sere and brown, fell to the river bank, on the other stood a small country house throwing out strips of pleasure ground and meadow along the margin of the brimming river. Beyond this, on the same bank, was a little kirk, and near by a manse with two or three cottages, while above the woody ridge that fringed this secluded settlement rose yet more grouse moors. This oasis we knew to be Abbey St. Bathans from what our publican had told us. The further fact that it had been an offshoot of Coldingham Abbey, of which the little church was in part a relic, would not, I fear, have then much interested us. Our four-mile walk up the banks of this entrancing moorland river took us a long time from the fact that every fresh bend of it revealed some sample of troutng water that we had to stop and admire, and tell each other what a treat we were in for, as is the way of anglers, more especially young ones exploring an unknown stream. We had good cause, for we had stumbled upon what is probably the best troutng river of all the many alluring and prolific streams that water the Scottish border-land.

There was no mistaking the inn when eventually we came upon it—an old whitewashed, slate-roofed, gabled building—even had the sign of *The Trout* not hung conspicuously over the door. It stood at the mouth of a narrow glen which brought down one of the many burns that helped to make the river what it was. We were on the wrong bank, however, and there was nothing for it but to wade the ford, here entered by a rough road from the back-lying Highlands.

Thence it ran up the glen past the inn and eventually out into the low country of Berwickshire. It was a romantic and secluded spot, and the old inn sheltered by a grove of trees was quite in harmony with its surroundings. A few shepherds, keepers or a passing sheep-farmer looked in there betimes, but it was known of anglers far and wide on both sides of the Border, as we soon realized, though with its half-a-dozen bedrooms and general sitting-room it was frankly primitive.

We were unexpected and the first comers of the season. In short, we were too early, but this after all was a mere voyage of exploration, and we already saw here many spring and summer days of glorious promise.

Our hosts were homely country folk—a rather delicate-looking couple with small children, and a rugged-looking sister-in-law of character and determination on whose shoulders, we soon found, rested the chief burden of the house. Forty odd years later one of these same little children, by that time a middle-aged tradesman in North Berwick, told me the story of Grace, his aunt, her self-denial and heroism, and how she gave up her life to maintain his delicate parents and their young family. But though on this occasion taken unawares and seven miles from a butcher, her eggs and bacon were good enough for us.

In the bitter north-east wind we sallied forth to the river, rather perhaps as investigators than fishermen, but we little expected to find what we did. For after about half an hour of futile flogging with no sign of a trout, I heard a shout from Larry, and looking up saw him running along the bank obviously with a big fish on. To shorten my story, I ultimately netted for him a fish of three to four pounds, of the salmon tribe. Larry, who lived in the heart of Ireland, had no acquaintance with sea-going fish except on a fishmonger's slab. I knew enough to recognize it as a sea-trout of some kind, but was not sure whether it was a kelt. So having secured half a dozen more of these specimens during the afternoon and had quite fun with them, we bore them back to the inn with mixed feelings of doubt and

triumph. Grace settled the question by refusing to cook them, and we improved our fish lore by the knowledge that they were bull trout which had come up to spawn in the autumn and had not yet returned to the Tweed and the sea. However, our deed was not criminal, as they never rose when fresh-run, and were worse than useless to the Whiteadder. So we determined to have another go at them the next day. But behold in the morning the whole country was white with a thick coat of snow, and it was still falling after breakfast.

The Lammermuirs ever and always have been renowned for heavy and untimely snowstorms. When news comes from the north of anxious flockmasters and buried sheep their name is pretty sure to be prominent in the newspapers. Our inn at Ellemford was not far from the southern or Berwickshire edge of the moors. Ten miles, away to the north, they dropped abruptly down into East Lothian. A fine wild sea of white, too, they looked that morning! From the inn door Larry's imagination was fired, and he proposed walking directly home across them. My fancy, too, was touched by the suggestion. Beyond the hills we well knew the lie of the land, as seen every day from Fenton-barns—another twelve miles or so across East Lothian. So after breakfast and discharging our bill, the total of which would only distress the present day angler to contemplate, we shouldered our traps and set off into the unknown.

After the unavoidable preliminary of again wading the river, our road, good enough for horsemen and just passable for a two-wheeled trap, followed the Whiteadder all the way up from its broad streams at Ellemford to the high bogs out of which its fountain springs trickled—a wild way enough under its now wintry garb. The track edged along the sides of the folding hills, while the stream, gradually lessening, danced in its narrow trough below. After an hour of brisk walking the stronghold of a great sheep farmer broke the solitude and the term is applicable, for beside the homestead on the hill-side rose a great mediæval Pele tower. Cranshaws had been given to a Swinton of the Merse

by Archibald, Lord Douglas, for his father's valour at Otterburn, when Hotspur was defeated, and his gallant death at Homildon, where years later Percy took such a terrible revenge on the Scots. The son and grantee of Cranshaws himself fell fighting with the French against Henry V, but not before he had earned distinction by slaying the Duke of Clarence.

" For Swinton laid the lance
That tamed of yore the sparkling crest
Of Clarence's Plantagenet."

All this, I need hardly say, had not yet come to my knowledge, nor yet the fact that in this remote moorland valley, beside the little kirk on the stream below, was the immemorial burial ground of the Swintons of Swinton in the Merse. The drum-and-trumpet memories of Cranshaws, however, had long been forgotten in the bloodless triumphs of the Bertram family in the peaceful grazing of Cheviot, and black-faced sheep upon a thousand hills. But even so, such recognition was not yet for us, as we wound our way around the snow-clad hills, with rods and creels, looking, one might think, the very picture of discomfited anglers. We were quite happy though, and felt that when we got home, if we ever did, we should have great adventures and a strange country to tell of to our stay-at-home friends.

Meeting neither man nor habitation for the next few miles, we came suddenly on another large farm-house and buildings on the bank of the stream, a veritable oasis in this great silent land. For the untimely snow seemed to have quelled the spring chorus of the moors that yesterday had been so cheerful. There was nothing now but the voice of the river twisting like a dark streak flecked with silver over the snow-white carpet of the glen below. The grouse, the plover, even the larks had been surprised and overwhelmed into a chilly silence. The lambs up here were not quite due, or there would have been loud enough complaints at such an inhospitable world. We crossed the now shrunken river by a foot bridge into the grass paddocks of Priestlaw, the most romantically secluded dwelling of importance I had

ever seen. We did not, of course, then know the significance of the place, nor of the Darling family, who had been here time out of mind—great flockmasters, and, like the Bertrams, of name renowned in the sheep world of the North. Priestlaw, however, was famous in other ways with which we shall make acquaintance later on.

The next six miles, the last stage through the moors, was the wildest of all. The rough-little-used road still followed what was left of the Whiteadder, after losing the last of its many tributaries near Priestlaw. There was nowhere any sign of human life or occupation, the whole country was the grazing ground of the black-faced or Cheviot flocks of the Priestlaw family, and the sporting ground of the grouse shooter. The high white hills all “ Laws and Dodds ” proclaiming this to be an old Northumbrian and Saxon land, lifted their summits from fourteen to seventeen hundred feet into the grey sky. I have by me now some lines written by a shepherd boy not very far from Priestlaw. He died in his teens over a hundred years ago, and recalling the memory of this snowy walk has brought him also to mind. In this one, among many surviving poems, the lad is invoking his native hills.

“ When columned snow by whirlwinds driven
Hides the earth and veils the heaven,
And the loud fury of the wind
Rouses the terror of the mind,
And superstition’s ghostly train,
Arise in all their strength again.
These I love, on these I dwell,
I know no thought I love so well.
At every Fall, Oh let me still
Delight to linger on the hill,
Or enfolded in my plaid
On the heather lay my head,
And dream a thousand dreams of bliss
And joy that knows no weariness.”

The strange thing is that these ingenuous lines should be in conventional English, when the tongue of the peasant lad who wrote them must have been the broad vernacular of the district. A contemporary of his from the same wild

parish went early to America, and became not only a poet of some merit, but a great bookseller, and the most notable exponent of Burns and chairman at Burns celebrations in the United States. He was fond of telling how his mother, of the old Calvinistic type, received the news of Walter Scott's death, which his father was grieving over.

"Hoots, gudeman, he's well awa'. He was just fillin' the heads of the folks wi' downright havers."

At last we arrived at the source of the Whiteadder in its natal bog just below our road, and passing the narrow watershed which divided the waters of Tweed from those of the Firth of Forth, were soon standing on the northern brink of the Lammermuirs. East Lothian and a great deal more lay spread beneath us like a map. No snow lay upon the Low Country. But it was a dour grey day, and though clear enough to impress us at the first sight, it is not as I then saw this glorious panorama, which I came later on to know so well under summer and autumn skies, that I should care to make record of it. From the Grampians in the north to the Northumbrian Cheviots in the south, from the furthest points of Fife in the North Sea to the heaped-up hills of Peeblesshire in the west, is what a ten minutes' climb on a fine day here will reward you with, and we may look at it yet in these pages. For we had no thoughts, on this murky day of such exploration and laden up with our packs, of climbing snowy heights for a wider view! We could see well enough what a noble parapet we were already standing on, whence descending several hundred feet to the village of Garvald, and the inn upon which we counted to refresh and speed us on our way, we electrified the village publican. Such an apparition as two young Southrons with knapsacks and fishing gear descending on him from the snow-bound heights above was unprecedented.

Here at any rate, before a peat fire, we shook the snow off our boots while our host was fetching whisky. A couple of hinds seated in the bar removed their pipes and gazed at us in silent, wide-eyed astonishment. The slowest of speech, and the most dependable behind the plough, of all God's

creatures, we were probably half-way home before they found their tongues. Not so the landlord.

"Ye'll hae come frae abune the hills?"

Yes, we had—from Ellemford.

"And ye'll be tae Edinborrie?"

(Edinburgh was the only conceivable place that could turn out such lunatics as he doubtless thought us.)

"No, we're for Fentonbarns," said I.

"Aye, I've heerd tell o' yon, it'll be Maister Hope's who stood for Parlyment awhiles back as a Leeberal."

When this was confirmed he went on with obviously more confidence in our sanity.

"But ye'l hae come by Priestlie (Priestlaw) the morn?"

We quickly identified the lonely farm-house indicated and nodded assent.

"And ye no had bite nor sup there?"

We disclaimed either the need for it at the moment or any acquaintance with the owner.

"Oh, that's nowt to dae wi't, but the auld gentleman is no well pleased if any strangers, gentles or the like o' that, pass by Priestlie wi' oot a meal or a dram in the hoose."

"But there was no one about the house or steading when we passed."

"Mebbe no, but if he'd kent ye frae the windy he'd a sent a sairvent rinnin', and ye'd have no got awa'."

We quite gathered the impression that if ever we encountered this great sheep farmer and patriarch of the waste at market or elsewhere, and he discovered that we had ever passed by Priestlaw, he would refuse to shake hands with us, and in truth we were not so very far wrong, as I came later on to realize. As our way home lay across the grain of enclosed country and the by-roads appeared circuitous Larry insisted on disregarding them and taking a bee line straight across East Lothian with the pointed cone of North Berwick Law, upon the distant sea-coast, as our mark. He had vaguely in mind, I fancy, the point-to-point races in which he had already won some distinction. But crossing the fenced tillage lands of East Lothian on foot with a pack

on your back was very different from galloping over Irish pastures.

It is twelve miles on the ordnance map from Garvald under Lammermuir to Fentonbarns. I don't know how many we had already walked by the time we reached home at dark, but a lot more than that. We were confronted, too, in mid-career by the River Tyne (the East Lothian Tyne) with no choice but to wade it. Larry, feeling responsible for our laborious route, nobly offered to take me over on his back, as our legs had long dried since the morning passage of the Whiteadder. Though not tall, he was a heavy man from bone and muscle, while I was a light weight. He could carry me on his back easily, whereas the reverse through rough-bottomed rivers would have been a dubious experiment (for him). On this obviously common-sense plan I rode Larry over many rivers and streams out shooting in his own country during the years we shot together, and with only one accident.

Our adventures in this Promised Land so near and yet so far from them were of intense interest to the household. For none of its members, or any of our own predecessors through the past years, strange to say, had ever given it a thought. Billy, who was a fisherman, was most excited, while Philip thought he must at least go up and have a look at the sheep farming.

At the séance in the kitchen that evening the girls were vastly amused at our description of the masterful Grace, the presiding genius of the *Trout Inn*, and made great play with my passage of the Tyne on Larry's back.

CHAPTER VII

MEN, MATTERS AND SCENES IN EAST LOTHIAN

ABOUT this time Philip and I paid a visit to the field of Bannockburn. My impulse was, I think, mainly historical. Philip's was the testing of a newly invented traction steam plough that was to be witnessed on or near that immortal field. We took the boat from Edinburgh up the winding Forth, ascended the Wallace Monument at Bridge-of-Allan, admired the Ochills towering close at hand and the Trossachs mountains far away. We slept at Stirling, and on the morrow descended to the scene of Bruce's victory, and the performance of the new patent steam plough. I was disappointed in the flat, uninteresting contour of the battlefield, so different from Flodden, which I came to know well later on. But Philip was not disappointed with the new traction plough. He had a "Fowler" at home in Lincolnshire, and was quite excited over the new invention, in which the engine dragged the plough behind it and seemed full of possibilities. Nothing came of it, however, and fifty years was to elapse before the petrol tractor of to-day more effectively accomplished the good intentions of the then Lord Dunmore.

Though with no historical tastes at that time, Philip was in more useful themes a most interesting and stimulating companion, and above all on everything concerning land. I took most of my home rounds with him, and my outside adventures with Larry. I learnt a great deal from Philip. He knew all about the botany, the plant life of farm crops in all their stages of growth, and as harvest approached was fond of estimating by all sorts of methods the likely yields per acre of barley, oats or wheat, or of turnips, swedes and

mangolds, the weights of fattening beasts, the tonnage contents of stacks and hayricks, the fleece on the backs of sheep. We all loved him and unanimously acclaimed him as the good and wise philosopher among us, who smiled so indulgently at our youthful vagaries, and, of course, we chaffed him as a paragon. And in his quiet, slow but cheery way he used to disclaim any sort of paragonship, and that if he was a quiet, sedate sort of old fellow he really lamented it, and that he honestly wished he could do the silly things we sometimes did, and that there must be something wrong with him.

But nobody in this world who knew him ever thought there was anything wrong with Philip. What a squire he would have made, but for the dreadful cataclysm of the 'eighties that overwhelmed the Eastern Counties. He would have seen his farms with the eyes of a practical farmer, and been at the mercy of no steward. No wisdom or knowledge could have prevailed against inexorable fate. But in the next generation, in the long breathing space before the War, when the worst was past and lower values accepted, squires like Philip would have done something towards preparing the ground to resist the present further collapse of the landed interest under death duties and inimical taxation. He was the only man, too, associated with it I ever encountered in those days who felt that the farm labourer was not getting fair treatment, though they were paying higher wages in his county than in most.

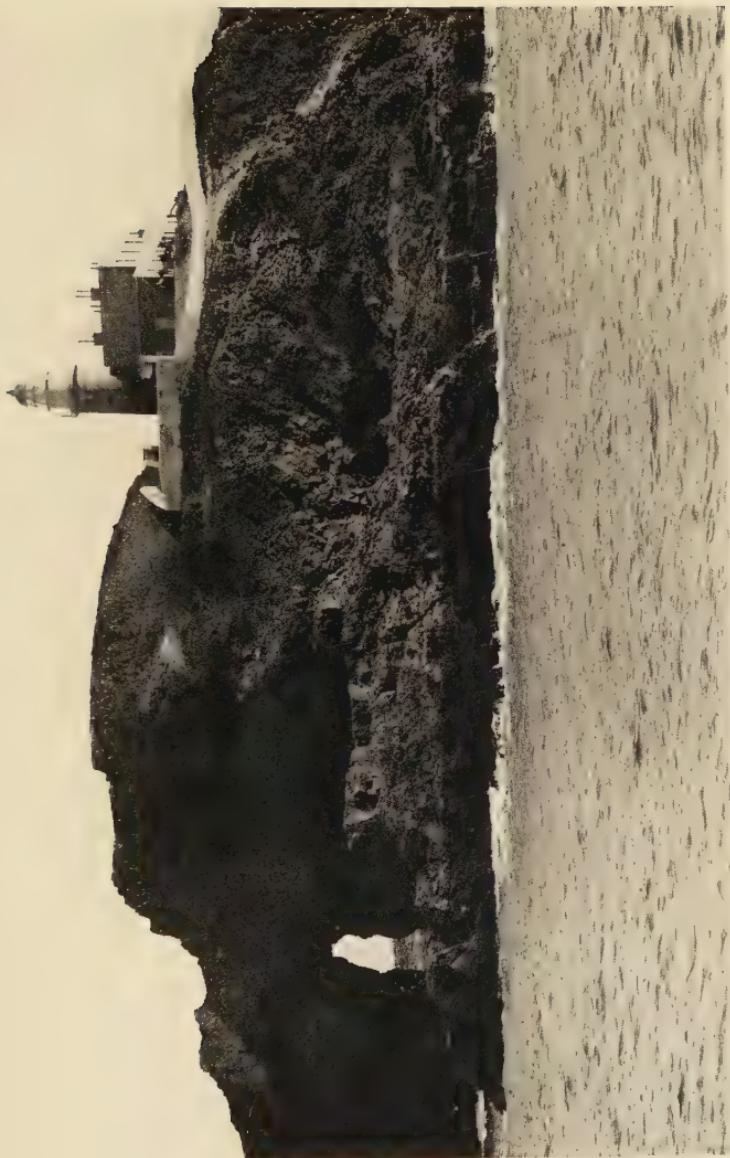
When a few years later Joseph Arch, an entirely honest, single-minded farm labourer himself, headed the great agitation for higher wages, Philip, who was then occupying one of his father's farms, not only secured him a hearing in the village schoolroom against much opposition, but put him up for the night !

My friend was no political crank or egotist, such as we are now too well acquainted with. As a matter of fact he was a Conservative. But his sense of equity insisted that the other side should have a fair hearing, more particularly as there was so much to be said for it. His neighbours

were, of course, all shocked, for to them Arch and his friends were all pestilent rascals. Anyone else would have been given the cold shoulder, but such a thing was out of the question with Philip.

The wages in Southern England then were 11s. a week and harvest money, wheat was over 6s. a quarter, wool 2s. 6d. a pound, the highest price I think within living memory, and fat sheep and ewes 8s. apiece, though butchers' meat, it may be added, was half what it is now. I had often heard in my childhood the Wiltshire wages, then about 8s. a week, spoken of at my father's table by his Liberal friends as a scandal. But in the agricultural world neither the most benevolent squire, whatever his politics, nor the most pious clergyman, and certainly no farmer thought anything of the kind. This attitude was, I think, pretty general. I remember the sort of feeling so well, as I automatically shared it myself, that farm wages had nothing to do with rents or profits, that the labouring class were entitled to a bare living, such as was then considered sufficient, and that more would be bad for them. In short, they had to be kept in their place, though it wasn't always put so crudely as this, while the situation was, of course, mitigated by a vast amount of personal kindness and charity. It was not as the Liberal and Radical manufacturers of the North, who treated, or had quite recently treated, women, girls and small children as slaves, compared to whose lot that of most plantation negroes, for whose freedom they loudly bellowed on platforms, was literally a Paradise.

And then in the 'nineties, when the farming interest had gone all to smash, and prices remained continuously at zero, though wages had actually risen and the necessities of life were extraordinarily cheap, all the Radical politicians and other urban ignoramuses as regards rural affairs began to shout about labourers' wages. They were now from 16s. to 22s., and living very cheap, while farming was so bad, and for reasons so glaringly obvious that there was absolutely no margin for a rise. Millions, indeed, had been



FIDRA ISLAND, DIRLETON

already paid in wages out of shrinking capital. The farm labourer, however, knew the situation as well as his master. If he gave his newly acquired vote to the politicians who promised him much, and did get him some benefits in common with labour generally, he knew well that better wages were not to be had out of the land. He knew his master's circumstances too, and was not such a fool as to think he could pay out money that was not there.

Now and then Philip and I had the privilege of walking round the farm with Mr. Hope. But he was a good deal in Edinburgh, and with such a devoted representative as old Hugh in addition to his son, had no occasion to be always at home. I was not deficient in the bump of veneration nor insensible to the privilege of such close contact with a man who had been a friend of Cobden, and whom the newspapers sometimes called the representative tenant farmer of Scotland. He was quiet of manner, and of a most kindly and amiable disposition. Though an outspoken upholder of what he conceived to be the rights of the Scottish tenant farmers, he never descended to abuse, and both in public and private was always sane and moderate. He had contested a local seat in Parliament as already mentioned. It seems strange nowadays to think that this was considered a piece of impertinence by the Lothian landowners, and that he was never forgiven by many of them. Social Scotland was still pretty much the Scotland of Ante-Reform-Law days. Clare Sewell Reade was the only English tenant farmer then in Parliament. But the Norfolk squires, whether Tory or Liberal, never dreamed of regarding his political prominence as a social impertinence or an intrusion, and he dined at their tables. Scotland was different. I am quite certain that no East Lothian tenant farmer, however eligible, would in those days have been asked to dine with an East Lothian laird. The line was very rigid, and there were proud people on both sides of it, which made for greater stiffness. Nor was there any of that large class of lesser gentlefolk, retired officers or civilians and their equivalents, who contribute so vastly to linking up and enlivening

country society almost everywhere in England, while the Rectory element, of course, was lacking. There was not even the sprinkling of offshoots of the old local families—widows, spinsters or younger sons, such as were and are found domiciled everywhere in rural England. They must have fled south, or to towns or to gayer neighbourhoods from the ponderous atmosphere emanating from their ancestral halls.

Mr. Hope had a profound belief in the immutability of British land. He had bought a 700-acre farm, Sunwick, in Berwickshire, a sheep run with grouse moor in Peeblesshire, Glencothy, and was then purchasing a beautiful Low Country farm, Borelands, in the same county. I knew them all then or later. He left mortgages on each with a light heart, so firm was his faith in the stability and future of land. He was dead in the 'eighties, and happily never saw the crash in the one form of investment, "that will never let ye down," as he used to say. He talked interestingly of the olden days, those of his boyhood, about the time of Waterloo, when the roads off the great coach routes were not metalled, and they were merely ploughed up every spring with a crown in the middle, and left to the grinding and mashing of wheel traffic all the year.

His grandfather had been the first of the family at Fenton-barns, of date about 1770. It was then a poor, wet, undrained, sour place, low-rented and unproductive, which this first Hope had spent a whole laborious life improving. The old gentleman was noted for his thrift, even among his neighbours, which at that day, I fancy, was saying a good deal. It was told of him that one day at a sale he picked up a pulpit and an old hearse for a song, and that when he got them home he made a feed trough of the first, and put a wagon body on the wheels of the hearse for farm use. About a month afterwards the old carter to whom the hybrid machine had been allotted, and who had been a faithful servant from boyhood, came and gave notice.

"Why, John," said his astonished master, "what's this? Is it the wages?"

"Na, na ! I've nae faut to fin' wi' the wages."

"Have ye any to find with me then ? "

"Na, I've naethin' agin you. Ye've aye been a guid maister."

"Well, man, what *is* it then ? "

"It's jes' thaе *wheels*. They aye pet me in mind o' mortality."

Mr. Hope used to talk interestingly too of the extraordinary development of Scottish agriculture, and the prodigious change in the condition of Scotland generally since his grandfather's days. I was a little too young to realize all that he meant at the time, but in later years, when the outdoor experiences I had gathered in different places and countries, and the interest aroused by them turned me to their history, that story of the dramatic transformation of Scotland in a hundred years from poverty to wealth always fascinated me. I don't mean the growth of Industrialism, but the entire transformation of the face of the country, and in the circumstances of its occupants in a period that might almost be covered by the lifetime of a single man, approximately, that is to say, between 1745 and Waterloo. There is nothing like it in the steady material growth from age to age of her wealthier partner. One reads of the Scottish Members of Parliament, after the Union, in the days of Anne and the first Georges as they rode up to London, looking with envy at the neat and productive farming lands of the Midlands and Hertfordshire, fetching rents that made their mouths water, and how impossible it was save for a few great nobles to bring their families and enter a society so immeasurably wealthier than themselves.

There was no loose capital in the country. Ill-farmed and unproductive land, bare of timber, represented almost the whole estate of man in Scotland, while even upon this the attorney had got a widespread grip. His dumbfoundering phraseology, so inimitably reproduced by Walter Scott, added a terror to the financial embarrassments of the involved laird, whose home life was more Spartan than that of many a Kentish yeoman. This growing acquaintance

with English rural conditions undoubtedly spurred on the Scottish lairds into their first efforts at reform. For it was they, not their tenants, who set the ball rolling. The cult of land improvement after English methods spread rapidly among them. "Some of them," says Ramsay, the Laird of Ochtertyre, that priceless chronicler of, and participator in, the movement, "carried their enthusiasm to eccentricity, even to taking their dinner into the fields and working with their men." English bailiffs and labourers were brought from the South to teach their methods to the obstinate and reactionary Scottish hinds and tenants. Strange telling this to a present-day Scotsman! Draining, liming, tree planting were the chief of these new activities, while turnips were introduced in due course. In the earlier eighteenth century mediæval ploughs still scratched the soil even of the Lothians, sometimes actually hitched on to the tails of the lean horses. Ewes were milked for household use. Rents were mostly paid in kind, and when commuted for money payment ran from 3s. to 5s. an acre even in the best parts of the Lothians and Berwickshire.

A most delightful book is this autobiography of Ramsay of Ochtertyre in the Carse of Stirling, who gives a full account of his own and his neighbours' efforts at land improvement, together with no end of information as to figures and details, between 1730 and 1750. And if any enquiring soul will combine with this the perusal of Mr. Graham's two volumes on *Social Scotland in the 18th Century*, he will have about completed the whole wonderful story of Scotland's leap forward from poverty to wealth, from infertility and microscopic rents to rent rolls that entirely overshadow those of the once envied landlords of Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Kent. But whence came the capital? How could bread thus come out of a stone? That is the curious, and at the first blush mysterious part of the story.

Always among the first and chief benefactors to agriculture come the "Nabobs," who through the eighteenth century returned in numbers from both East and West Indies to invest their fortunes in estates and circulate money.

Then there was the gradual rise of Glasgow and other towns through sea-borne trade. The inclusion of the Highlands within the realm of law and order after the "45" was another factor, as it stimulated the Southern trade with their one product, cattle. Given the impetus from these sources, the natural aptitude of the Scotsman, dormant through the past ages, did the rest. Just as the Highlander of the period, whose previous existence had been one of slothful indigence, blossomed beyond the Atlantic into industrious and successful settlers and merchants, and a race who had never seen a tree became among the first to clear the Nova Scotian and Ontario forests.

The battlefield of Preston-Pans lay on our road to Edinburgh, with the monument to the defeated Colonel Gardiner, who fell there, conspicuously marking the scene of the rout of his foot and dragoons. Nowadays the whole line from Preston-Pans to the city is bordered by factories and dwellings. Then one ran almost into the Scottish capital through the highly cultivated Mid-Lothian farms. But the population of the city has, I think, trebled since those days. However, I did not often go to Edinburgh. Cities didn't much interest me—even "Auld Reekie"—while the country seemed so full of things that did. I cannot, I fear, to this day feel the same about the association of an old tavern or a dwelling squeezed up in some dark slum or street as I feel about a cottage, manor or castle consecrated to the memory of some wise or valiant man of old. I don't think I even enquired the whereabouts of Scott's old home in Edinburgh, but I went forty miles to see his uncle's farmhouse, and the ruined Pele tower in Roxburghshire overlooking the Vale of Tweed, where, as a lame child, he spent his summers and first dreamed the dreams with which in after years he delighted the world. I went to Edinburgh once, I remember, to spend the day with Mr. and Mrs. Tom Hughes, old friends of my family. They were staying, I think, with the Sellars, at least I have always hoped memory has not been treacherous on this point, as I like to think that I was then entertained by the

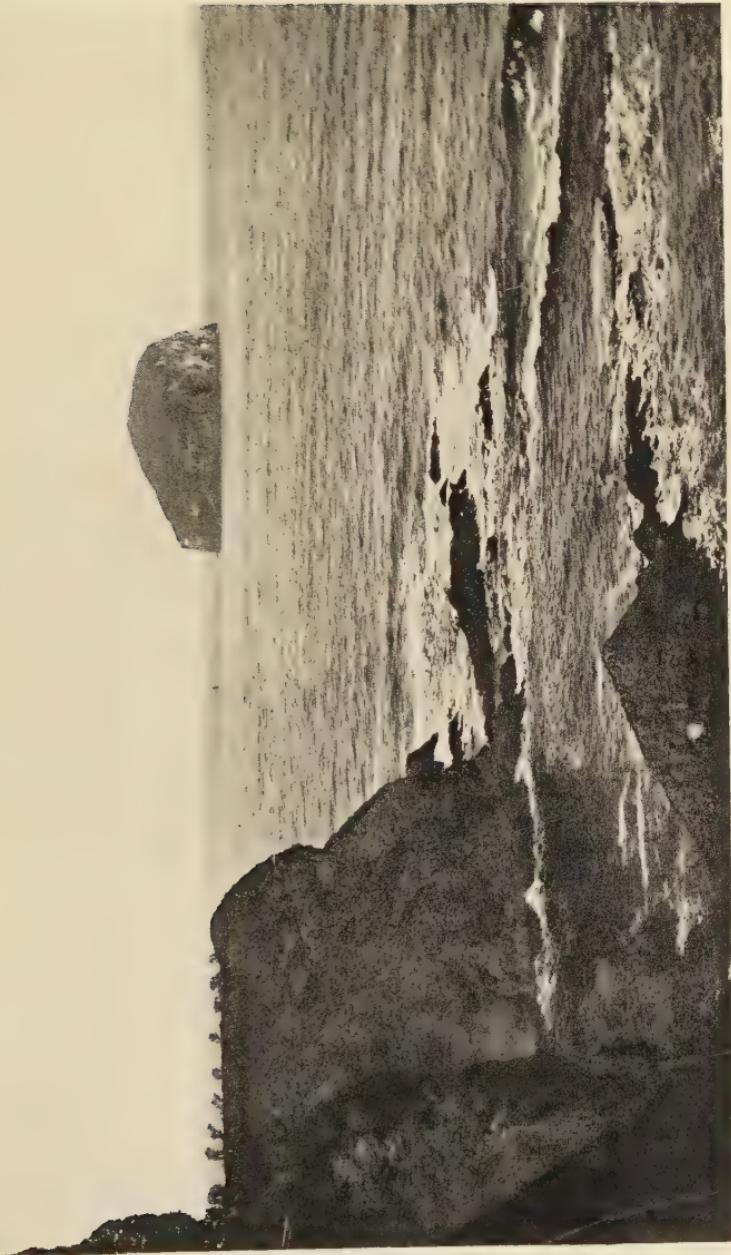
witty lady whose sprightly reminiscences of Edinburgh gave me so much pleasure long afterwards in the reading. A relative of hers told me recently that her last appointment in old age with her dentist ran thus on a post card :

“ Change and decay in all around I see,
O thou who healest both arrange with me.”

Mr. Hughes had not yet launched that ill-fated farming scheme of his in the United States—a lot of public school boys dumped down on poor forest land in the mountains of Tennessee, the most ill-designed, unpractical, foredoomed scheme that ever was. But Mr. Hughes if an idealist was a fine, breezy, manly soul. Both he and his wife were delightful with boys. My father was his contemporary at Rugby, and used to declare that when *Tom Brown* came out (anonymously) his Rugby friends could not be induced to believe that he was capable of writing it.

There was a very fine ruined castle, already alluded to, at Dirleton, adjoining our light-land seashore farm. I cannot say we haunted it much, nor had its charming grounds yet become as now an afternoon resort for golf widows and orphans of that now golf-invaded shore. We knew vaguely that its splintered towers, festooned with ivy, had been in the thick of all the Anglo-Scottish wars. I don't think even so much then interested Philip, yet such are the changes and chances of life that now in his declining years, he is so intimately concerned with feudal castles that he has actually written a book about those of his native county, while as for me, I truly and honestly believe I have at least visited more of them, English, Scottish or Welsh, than almost anyone now living. But I won't inflict the thrilling story of Dirleton acquired in after years upon my reader.

Tantallon, a few miles off, was different. Its superb pose upon a cliff edge, confronting the huge mass of the Bass Rock, rising sheer out of the sea, makes it a spectacle in itself, only inferior to its prototypes, English Bamborough and Welsh Harlech. Larry walked with me there, I remember, on my first visit. Almost his only literature, as I have



BASS ROCK FROM TANTALLOM

said, was Scott, and Tantallon for both of us spelled *Marmion*. The great name of Douglas, too, meant something to me, and I did know that the Douglas of the Flodden era, Bell-the-Cat, Earl of Angus, had left James' army at Flodden just before the battle in high dudgeon. He had urged the King to recross the Tweed while there was yet time, and not to court either disaster or a bloody, unprofitable victory, a piece of advice which the King rejected with such ill-considered words that the old warrior went back there and then to Tantallon, leaving two sons, however, to fall in the battle. Though little more than a shell, the height and length of this, its curtain walls spreading upon the landward side from a central keep to two massive drum towers at the corners, present a most imposing front, the more so as Scottish castles, numerous though they be, are seldom large. Only one side here is vulnerable, the other three drop down to the sea below.

“ Above the booming Ocean leant
The far-projecting battlement,
The billows burst in ceaseless flow
Upon the precipice below.”

The wide green pasture over which one approaches the fortress on the landward side exposes its whole front elevation to great advantage, as well as the form and circuit of the outer defences and ramparts. Battlements and inside buildings have long vanished, and a broad lawn, with the deep castle well in its centre, opens a fair and verdant terrace to the sea, which rumbles upon the red rocks far below. As you cross the inner of the two moats up to the gateway, where the falling portcullis grazed Marmion's plume, it will be remembered, as he made a dash for his liberty at the rising drawbridge, the bloody heart of the Douglas still confronts you on the wall. “ It must have been a great leap,” was Larry's characteristic utterance as we stood before it.

Cars and charabancs from Heaven knows where now line up on the neighbouring road. When I paid that first

visit fifty-five years ago there was little sign that any interest at all was taken in the castle.

It will seem strange, no doubt, to this generation what an influence Scott exercised over us in those days, and for which I fervently thank Heaven. He made you *feel* a country, I can't otherwise express it, if you were capable of it, as no one else has ever done. Not merely its surface and its scenery, but for what these stand for, the significance that underlies them. In short, the story they have to tell, as well as those he has himself adorned them with. He gave one a desire to know one's own country and something of the men and women who had lived, and to see something more in a feudal castle than its effect in a landscape, or the lines of its fortification, the workmanship of its builders, and in an old manor house to look beneath its oak timbers and twisted chimneys and panelled rooms, and see the men and women whom they sheltered. Wherever he touched it Scott made the landscape live.

So urged one day by this invisible wand of the great magician, Larry and I strapped our knapsacks on our backs and started off to cross the county once more to the foot of the Lammermuirs. Our goal this time was the village of Gifford, and the adjoining woods of Yester, containing that "Glen of demons," where Marmion had his midnight encounter with its ghostly occupant, and returned to his inn, it may be remembered, a good deal the worse for wear in body and pride. We took none of Larry's point-to-point routes on this occasion, nor did we again wade the Tyne. But we tramped soberly along the Haddington road across the Galton hills, from which there is a charming view over the Abbey town and birthplace of John Knox, with the glint of the Tyne showing here and there in the rich vale its bright waters traverse so briskly.

It is some six miles on to Gifford, a quite picturesque village for Scotland with a lively and pellucid burn Prattling down its one-sided street. In these days it is a Sunday resort for Edinburgh trippers; in those, Edinburgh people had to stay at home on the Sabbath and refrain from

whistling, though they might drink whisky. The only village inn, by 1914 quite a little hotel, was then a mere tap-room house. But then we had persuaded ourselves, or perhaps I had persuaded Larry, that it was the very hostelry, there being no other, where Marmion and his company must have spent the night of that weird encounter. For we intended to sleep there ourselves and visit the glen next morning. The innkeeper eyed us sourly when we spoke of beds. He had never had such an application in his life from such as us. When we told him that our object was to visit the Goblin tower and Glen, he obviously regarded us as a couple of daft loons running after vain and foolish things, and rather a nuisance than otherwise. Perhaps it would have been too much to have expected him to be up in *Marmion*? The name of Fentonbarns, however, lulled his suspicions of our sanity, and he rather sulkily put us up in primitive fashion, but proved very poor company. I couldn't help contrasting him with his predecessor of four centuries earlier, who had spun such a splendid yarn to his exalted guests as to urge Marmion forth on his disastrous nightly quest. For our landlord was quite incapable of entertaining us like Marmion's host either in prose or verse!

Now Yester House, the seat of the Marquis of Tweedale, the head of the abounding Hay family, with its woods and glens and park-lands adjoined the village. Incidentally it is one of the claimants to be the original of Ravenswood House in Scott's tragedy. Immediately behind it Lammer-law, the highest hill of the range, lifts its pointed summit some 1700 feet into the sky, affording perhaps the finest and most significant view in all the Lowlands of Scotland, though very few Scotsmen know it, and fewer still knew it in the days I write of. In August it is one blaze of purple heather. But this was a cold day in early spring, and the woods below were but faintly tinged with the promise of the season. This, however, mattered little to our quest. We found in due course the haunted dene, through the aid of locals of more literary bent than our landlord. We

followed the track up through the thick woods beside the winding burn till we came to the Goblin tower, where, no doubt, we felt the satisfaction that all pilgrims feel when they have reached the Holy Place. I am not sure whether we knew at the time that our fictitious hero was the first person to challenge this mystic foe in his innermost haunt since Alexander III of Scotland. But then the King had met the real bogey man, while the arrogant Marmion was so knocked about, as we know, by his own rival and companion de Wilton, posing as such.

Old Hugh Bertram couldn't understand these little trips of ours. He didn't sympathise much with our fishing expeditions, though he regarded them with a broad toleration as our own affairs, for he was merely our host. In his innermost heart he had, I think, a contempt for all amusements. He spent the rare holidays which he allowed himself in visiting other farms, with the eye of an uncompromising critic. Still the baskets of trout we fairly often brought back to the house blunted the edge of his satire. But for *Marmion*, and the like, the old man had no use at all. Heaven knows he had not much time for books in his fiercely industrious life, though I think he knew his Bible by heart. If we had hunted up the birthplace of John Knox in Haddington he might have held that there was something in it. I wonder, though, what he would have thought of a certain young woman, Jane Welsh Carlyle, becoming to a vast English and Scottish public the *genius loci*, as it were, of Haddington, the greatest grain market in Scotland. Good heavens, what would he have said to that? Still our expedition to Yester started him talking of the "Markis o' Twiddle" (as he always called him), and his estate from the agricultural view-point. But the dear old man, except on Sundays, was after all of quite merry habit. In his light moods at dinner he would point the sword-bayonet at Philip and exalt him as a man of sense and steady habit, who stuck to the farm and never went gallivanting. To which Philip would respond after his usual self-deprecating fashion that this was only because he was a slow-going sort of fellow and

lacked enterprise. But, of course, the old man would not hear of this.

Harvest—"Hairst" as Hugh very properly called it—was, I need hardly say, a great event on this and the surrounding farms. The reaping machines had, of course, been already running for some years, but the "self-binder" was still in the far future, so that the great hordes of Irishmen, which that invention much reduced, were still coming over. We used to take on a good many at Fentonbarns, in addition to the large force of resident men and women. Our Irishmen came mostly from Donegal, taking ship, no doubt, from Derry. The whole force, home and alien, had their porridge allowed them through harvest. The meal was cooked and stirred in a great stone boiler used for mixing cattle food on ordinary occasions. The groom, a portly individual, used to officiate here and stir it—or to be correct stir "them"—with a large wooden granary spade. The people used to crowd in for their portion at the midday hour, bringing each their wooden "bicker" into which the perspiring William used to shovel the allotted portion with his huge spade. To each was also given a bottle of small beer, the only season at which that drink was used in those parts. Yet the reader will, no doubt, be surprised to hear that beer had been as much the national drink of Scotsmen as of their Southern neighbours till the Union, when the malt tax being automatically extended to Scotland ruined the Scottish breweries, and whisky was substituted as the popular drink below the ranks of claret.

To look over the breadth of Fentonbarns and the three or four adjoining farms from our uplifted situation, when the grain was all in the stook, was a sight such as I have never seen since in any country. Time and again I have overlooked far greater areas of grain under harvest both at home and abroad, but never one where the stooks or shocks stood so thickly on the ground, and this for the excellent reason that nowhere else was the yield per acre so consistently high. There were none of the ceremonies and junkettings common in most parts of England to the winding up of

harvest and the "last load." It would almost seem as if agriculture was here too serious and scientific a business to permit of such frivolities, though a barn dance was sometimes held, when the rather dour hinds and, save for the Highlanders, rather unemotional female stalwarts of bondagers, cut loose pretty freely under the influence of whisky to which they were not much accustomed. We never had one at Fentonbarns, but the many tales which have rung down the ages of those held elsewhere are not exactly of the Sunday School type! The serried rows of neat circular stacks that flanked the steadings after harvest were a sight to behold. In truth, they are still. A few years ago, while passing through East Lothian in October, and without any particular selection, I counted sixty-three in one stackyard off a moderate sized farm on the Dunbar red land.

But I am sure the reader won't stand any more farming, and if through keeping this in mind, and so dwelling mainly on our mild adventures in other fields, it should suggest that we paid but slight attention to it ourselves, I cannot help it, though actually this was not the case. I must, however, relate one incident associated with the farm, as it was really dramatic. Now from one of the autumn ram sales that year young Hope brought home a valuable Border Leicester tup, for which he had paid the high price for those days of £50. On the stranger's arrival he was by some mischance introduced at once into the same field with the home ram already in possession of the ewes. The latter lost no time, but went straight at a gallop and head down for the intruder. The fifty-pounder was no poltroon, but met his enemy in the gap without any hesitation in like fashion, but had not time to get so much steam up. The owner and the shepherd, who witnessed the collision, likened it to the meeting of two locomotives. The stranger fell off the rebound dead as a stone with a broken neck, and never moved again. The home champion was half stupefied for a few moments, but, pulling himself together and getting up again, was preparing, so the shepherd said, for another go at his enemy, when he realized, and no

doubt with triumph, that the intruder was a corpse. There was an irresistible touch of humour, too, about the affair in which even the owner, after his first annoyance, quite shared. But not so old Hugh, though it was not his loss or his responsibility, but his master's, which was quite characteristic. For two or three days after this deadly joust of the two rams he was quite depressed, or "*sair hedd'n doon*," as he would have expressed it. It seemed to him a reflection on the management which had made Fentonbarns great—a suggestion almost of carelessness, or what was worse even a jest, to be noised abroad at market and elsewhere.

CHAPTER VIII OF SPORTS AND PASTIMES

THERE are now, I think, ten golf courses on the few miles of coast between North Berwick and Aberlady, inclusive, frequented by hundreds of players from all over Britain. There were just three in 1871: nine holes at North Berwick, thirteen at Gullane, and nine very rough ones at Archerfield. The first had some reputation outside the neighbourhood and attracted golfers from Edinburgh, while a few took quarters there. Gullane, too, was patronised by a few daily visitors on holidays besides the neighbouring farmers and the like. Archerfield was confined entirely to the locals, namely, the Dirleton club of about twenty members, subscription 2s. 6d. a year ! But all these courses were actually free, a "club" mainly existed for competitions. I joined that of Dirleton myself, being initiated into the first mysteries of the game by my friend, Hope Junior. As a cricketer I had everything to unlearn, and this among a people who knew nothing of cricket and could not understand one's primitive impulses to jump out at a half-volley was much more difficult than amid a company of sympathetic, sophisticated modern golfers. Larry would not touch the game. He was purely a sportsman and had no taste for games, which last, by the way, were not classed as "sport" in those days. Larry would turn in his grave could he hear a golfer or lawn tennis player on that account called a sportsman.

Heaven forbid that I should inflict on the reader my early efforts at golf, though the strange, uncanny game fascinated me at once. Not that I played very often :

there were too many other occupations grave and gay. Yet I am glad to have been at least initiated at a time when I doubt if another Englishman could have been found playing on all that classic coast between Edinburgh and Dunbar, at which last place, by the way, there was another nine-hole course that I also played on once or twice and many times in later life. In these days when almost every human being plays golf it is not easy to make the reader realize what a mystery was its very name to South-countrymen in 1871. In a book of games I had as a boy, it was described as "a species of hockey played in Scotland." It is true that a stray Englishman or two might even then have been found at St. Andrews, as the game had been started by a small group at Westward Ho ! in N. Devon. Some London Scots, too, played at Blackheath and Wimbledon, as everyone knows. That was all, and it amounted to nothing in lifting the veil of obscurity that then shrouded the very name of golf. Most Southerners who got a fleeting glimpse of it condemned it unhesitatingly as a grotesque pursuit. I daresay this now sounds incredible, but it is the simple truth nevertheless.

Fifteen years later when there were some half a dozen courses in the South and I had the opportunity of renewing my acquaintance with the game, it was still so strange that carrying clubs—there were as yet no bags—on railway journeys was really embarrassing from the intense curiosity they aroused. For it must be conceded they do look like nothing else on earth. I daresay even yet there are some who think that golf was the national game of Scotland. It was nothing of the kind. It was only played on the south-east coast from St. Andrews, or, say, Montrose, to East Lothian inclusive, and then mostly by residents. Folk in the north and west of Scotland, Glasgow for instance, and most inland counties, knew no more about golf than those of Yorkshire or Hampshire. Yet so little was this understood after the game had invaded England that I remember a big suburban club I belonged to in the 'nineties used to open their annual dinner in London with a Highlander in

a kilt marching round the room playing the bagpipes. It was the funniest thing I ever saw. They might quite as reasonably have sent a Red Indian round singing his war song !

Occasionally we played over the thirteen-hole course at Gullane, then only a rustic village. On a week-day two or three couples of neighbouring farmers might be out ; on Saturdays a few Edinburgh players would come down and occasionally hold competitions limited in number. Sometimes golfers would put up and dine at the one public-house in the village, and consume large quantities of whisky. There is still a round, stone house on Gullane hill. This was the quarters of the " Round House Club," a society limited, I think, to twelve members. On initiation the newly elected one had to take a header off a neighbouring rocky point called Jovey's nuik into the sea in his clothes and thence return to the stone fortress of the club and drink off a bottle of whisky—so it was said. The club still existed in 1914, but the initiatory terms had been abolished. For one thing there were now some English members, and it would have killed them. Only Scotsmen of the last and former generations could do this sort of thing. My 'prentice games were, of course, only indulged in with neighbours, but I did sit through one annual dinner of the Dirleton club at the village inn, consisting mostly of the neighbouring farmers young and old. The longest handicap would not have enabled me to get anything like level with these hard-headed souls in the matter of tumblers, but I came out unscathed. I remember the chairman on proposing the health of the two or three new members remarked, though putting it of course nicely, on the unprecedented fact of an Englishman being one of them. I merely note this as significant.

So much for golf, as I saw it at its fountain head in the days of yore. I have still preserved as curios some of the old whippy, long-headed clubs then in use and that most moderns see only in pictures. The feather ball, though, had gone out some time back, and gutties were in full use, and



NORTH BERWICK LAW

it is a great pity they were ever superseded. The old Scottish golfers did not dress specially for the game, as, indeed, anyone may see from the many prints of the St. Andrew gatherings before the 'eighties. It was against tradition, which was fearfully strong, to get up as if for a day's shooting or fishing. Knickerbockers had just come in for such purposes, but I never saw anyone at North Berwick or Gullane golfing in them. Red coats, which had a later vogue in both Scotland and England, were only, I think, worn at Wimbledon and Blackheath for practical reasons as a warning to the public. The old-timers of my East Lothian days would have had a fit could they have foreseen the weirdly clad, gaudy throngs that now cover the golf links of four continents. To take a coat off, even in the hottest weather, was then one of the unforgiveable sins, and this tradition came south and remained till not long ago, when the Americans, whose climate made shirt sleeves a necessity, broke it down. Country headgear in the 'sixties and early 'seventies was in transition. I can recall by name one or two veterans who even golfed in top-hats.

"Bowlers" were still worn a good deal in shooting and fishing, and had certain advantages probably unsuspected by later generations, who have put them out of court for such purposes. They were often, too, worn in the cricket field, particularly by professionals, as I can recall from personal experience, and the reader if sceptical can easily verify the fact, if he chooses, by a glance at the illustrations in any book on cricket history. Soft, rough country hats of many and various shapes had been creeping in by the later 'sixties. Cloth caps were rare and of strange shape. The present type for universal use appeared in the later 'eighties with a great rush, and, as it proved, came to stay. "Scotch caps," both the Lowland bonnet, virtually a cloth or frieze Tam o' Shanter, and less often the Glengarry sometimes with silver brooch and crest, were worn a good deal by men of all classes. The Lammermuir shepherds still sported the plain bonnet and plaid discarded by the end of the century for commonplace gear such as a

water-proof coat and a sou'wester. Philip, I remember, stalked nobly about the farms in a Glengarry, while Billy affected a Lowland bonnet of the largest circumference and the biggest top-knot procurable.

As April waned and the weather softened and winds began to blow softly from the distant Lammermuirs instead of fiercely off the cold North Sea, Larry and I struck out again for Ellemford. This time we found quite a little company gathered there, but as the range of water was unlimited this did not disturb us. Half a dozen or so guests, mostly old habitués, were at the inn—a lawyer from Edinburgh, a bank manager from Duns, a corn merchant from Berwick, and “the like o’ that.” We all caught plenty of trout according to our respective merits, though I will forbear the tale of their capture. For miles up-stream even to its source as recounted in our recent snowy walk, the White-adder was, and is, an open moorland river. Four miles below it begins to chafe and plunge in rocky gorges, tufted with birch and fir, with heather and bracken. Or again, quivering in long, amber-tinted, gravelly pools beneath the swaying shadows of oak and sycamore, beech and mountain ash, beautiful to behold and beautiful to fish. Thence issuing from the high moors it urges its always clear and lively streams through the farms and park lands of Berwickshire till, untamed to the last, it tumbles into the quiet tidal waters of the Tweed near Berwick.

The trout as usual in such rivers are of the smaller type, though they may reach anything. It is a bold saying, but I have always believed the Whiteadder to be the finest natural trouting river of its class between the Firth of Forth and the Land’s End, Wales inclusive, though despite a fairly wide experience within these limits I would hesitate at so strong a statement were it not for the many good anglers I have known who would support it. Yet practically the whole thirty to forty miles of its course has been free for all time to the most trout-fishing people on the face of the earth, men who fish fly or bait with equal assiduity.

But such has been the fecundity of this wonderful stream that in 1914, when I last fished it, there were assuredly as many, if better educated, trout in it as in 1871. A relative of mine who has fished it every year from 1876 till three years ago holds that opinion and with better authority. At any rate, baskets of 15 lbs. and even of 20 lbs. were occasionally being taken by local experts within six miles of Berwick, its most frequented portion.

I commend this to the consideration of my old friends in Wales and the South-West or their successors, who, if they encounter a couple of other rods in the course of a day, shake their heads and talk of overfishing. Why should a river that in characteristics is virtually a replica of the Dart or the Barle, the Teify or the Dovey and a score of others have maintained its native stock of trout under conditions that permitted in similar districts in England would be regarded as madness, and merely inviting sterility. All my life this has been to me an insoluble mystery. Locals are not helpful, as naturally they cannot understand why rod fishing should hurt any river or why preservation is necessary. As to one's own countrymen, they are frankly incredulous. My few English acquaintances who know the Whiteadder, as I do, give the thing up as a mystery, though recognizing it as a fact. *The Field* has never been able to suggest a solution. While even supposing the river had some inexplicable feeding properties not possessed by other streams of like characteristics, we still have the Leader, another tributary of Tweed, a few miles westward.

Classic in angling lore as well as in song, shorter in course and more accessible from centres, equally with the Whiteadder, though not quite such a captivating river and preserved in portions, the Leader trout up to 1914 had successfully survived the onslaughts of generations of anglers, including the club competitions—those dread functions beloved of and peculiar to Scottish and particularly Edinburgh trout fishermen. And here, lest these excursions into the mysteries of trout fecundity should encourage some

angling reader to dash off to the Whiteadder or Leader, let me say at once that 1927, alas, is not 1914. Motors have destroyed the seclusion which even there, save for the fishermen, was complete, on newly made roads, while camping-out parties, things never heard of before the war, have invaded these once lonely moors. The miner, too, in his abounding hours of leisure, comes in groups from distant coal-fields, and if the trout are coy to his rod resorts to evil and destructive methods, as one would expect of him. Even the White-adder will not stand this indefinitely, and now at long last I hear its hitherto irreducible trout are on the decline. Perhaps, too, tarred roads have been made along the rough lonely ways over which a dogcart used to struggle with difficulty. If so, that pest which is poisoning fish all over England is at work there too.

But none of these sore afflictions troubled us in the good old days of the *Trout Inn* at Ellemford. Its patrons used to come up in the landlord's spring-cart from Duns, seven miles away, and reached by a branch line. They were a hearty and jovial company round the peat fire in the evening, when the indefatigable Grace had cleared the supper away and brought in the toddy tumblers and the kettle. I had never stayed in a regular haunt of fishermen and the wandering angler with his store of talk and knowledge before, though I have sampled many a one since. These people and their talk, which seemed to traverse all the streams on both sides of the Border, interested me greatly. There seemed to be romance, too, in the very names of many of them, vaguely familiar to one's ear through song and ballad from childhood. And this lost nothing by the matter-of-fact intimacy with which they would speak of these classic waters, and I used to feel pleasurable thrills on hearing the Till, the Teviot, Esk or Ettrick discussed pool by pool and intimately associated with the trout they harboured and the particular flies that skimmed the surface of their classic waters. It seemed to give a strange reality to streams that for me had belonged wholly to the world of song and romance. Or, again, when some veteran would

tell of a fight with a Tweed salmon in the pool under Norham Castle, or another spoke of the evening rise of fly on St. Mary's loch.

TROUTING, as I had followed it from almost childhood, always, that is to say, amid scenes of beauty, wild or wooded, was inextricably associated with such æsthetic and poetic instincts as I then possessed. The world was fresh and new, all aglow with the glamour of youth, and the world that held my fancy at that moment to be enjoyed and explored so far as circumstances allowed was this Borderland of Scotland. I had a vague sort of feeling that I might never have such a chance again, and it behoved me to make the very utmost of it that circumstances and a reasonable regard to other obligations allowed. If I had only known that such knowledge as we gathered of the high Lothian farming, interesting though it was, was inapplicable and virtually useless to the future of most of us, I should have been saved many doubts and uncertainties. But then if I had known so much, I should not have been in Scotland at all, and I would not have missed any bit of my life there for worlds. Such an introduction to the country and its people was an asset to me for life, though not one to be expressed in words and certainly not in figures. I had an odd premonition at the time, too, that it would be so without any apparent justification.

Our company at the *Trout Inn*, as I have stated, were all Scotsmen, middle-class, typical, representative provincial Scotsmen of that day, men whose thoughts, except no doubt in Imperial matters, never concerned themselves with things south of the Tweed. During the war *Punch* represented a Scottish sergeant thus invoking the bookstall agent at Charing Cross station: "Gie me the Peebles Express." Agent (curtly): "We don't keep it." Sergeant (condescendingly): "A' weel then, jes' gie me one o' yer local papers." On the face of it this looks merely rather a good but quite farcical joke: actually it expresses in a single sentence, with but the necessary touch of hyperbole, the attitude of the average provincial stay-at-home Scotsman,

his complete absent-mindedness towards his Southern neighbours and their country, always excepting, of course, Parliament and affairs which concern the whole nation. Fifty years ago it was far more marked. The surprise of a lad of twenty is of slight importance, but I well remember mine on finding myself, when among Scotsmen, almost as much an alien as if I were in America, and yet more on realizing how many of the intelligent Scotsmen I met and associated with in my two years' residence had never set foot in England, though you could actually see it from any hill-top.

So our fishermen at the hostelry of the "Trout" talked and yarned over their pipes and toddy of glorious streams to my great edification, and, of course, like all anglers, of their several achievements thereon. Then, too, they sang songs, invariably Scottish songs, the simple old airs which always appealed to my feelings and my susceptible but ingenuous ear—"The Flowers o' the Forest," "O' a the airts the wind can blaw," "Within a mile o' Edinburgh Toon," "Jock o' Hazeldean" and such like. I used to admire the intense patriotism in this particular of the provincial Scot. Whether humming as he dealt a hand at whist or loo, whistling as he went about the house, or more formally and far less often singing at his wife's piano, it was first and last and all the time a Scottish air. There were comic songs in the Doric, of course, too, plenty of them. I remember particularly one most entertaining ditty which told of a rustic swain who used to come a distance and pay nocturnal visits to the window of his lady love, whose room was on the ground-floor. The title of the song was "The bonnie wee windy." The said window was only just large enough for the amorous youth to get his head inside and so kiss the girl only with her consent. But the maiden had coy moods, which, on one occasion, provoked her lover to squeeze his shoulders through the "wee windy." At this critical moment an irate father appeared in the rear of the scene, and finding a victim absolutely inviting punishment and laid out for it by his posture, began showering blows on his hinder part.

The unfortunate swain, though he had pushed his shoulders in, could not for the life of him get them out.

“ He rugged, he tugged,
He swore and he curst.”

So there he was, being leathered unmercifully and at leisure like a schoolboy by the infuriated parent. At last in his despair from pain and humiliation he pulled the whole frame of the window away, but still firmly attached to his person, and in such fashion careered across country whence he came, father still pursuing him with his stick. The song ends with the chorus of “ O that awfu’ wee windy,” and is one of the most telling rustic songs when rendered with fervour and in good Doric that I ever heard. Of stories, too, there was no lack.

The old tag that Scotsmen have no sense of humour is about on a par with the notion of half-baked Americans that Englishmen have none. But as American and English humour differs, so though less markedly the mirth of Scotsmen has a certain flavour of its own, partly due to the racy speech in which it is expressed. Of the many Scotch stories I have heard, and for the most part enjoyed in my life, two from this old fishing inn have always stuck in my memory as having a rather specially national flavour. One of them was told by a Galashiels doctor, who was in the habit of visiting a river somewhere to the westward, which was reached by a small branch line. The easy work at the little terminus was done by a single porter, an elderly man who had been there since time (railway time) began ; quite a character, independent and blunt of speech, knowing and known by everybody. The old man was blessed with a clever son, who became a minister. On the doctor’s last visit, the youth came to preach for the first time in his native village and greatly edified it, so the next time the doctor encountered the old porter he congratulated him on his son’s success. “ Aye,” said the other, without a sign of enthusiasm, “ the lad’s weel eneuch. He gets his brains frae me and his eloquence frae his mither—an’ she was aye

a blatherin' b-t-ch." This apparently terrible indictment of his wife will, of course, be understood metaphorically, a mere flower of speech common enough to the rough tongue of the Lowland Scot at that time.

The other tale was told us by an Edinburgh lawyer, who, in the previous winter, had gone down to his native town in Fife to the funeral of a local worthy. The deceased, always prominent in local affairs and of the highest respectability, had nevertheless been consistently in opposition to most of his colleagues and their views, a man, in short, difficult either to drive or lead—what old Hugh would have called a "maist countermandery mon." Preceding the funeral, the coffin was still in the house and according to custom the minister was inside with the family mourners, while the general company were grouped outside waiting to follow the corpse to the cemetery, whenever it should emerge. An unconscionable time passed. It was very cold. The company were blowing on their fingers, stamping up and down to keep their feet warm, and still there was no sign of the coffin. Everyone was waxing impatient, when at last a well-known townsman and old colleague in office of the deceased was struck with an inspiration, and in a dry, serious tone suitable to occasion exclaimed, "Mebbe John will no gang"—the ruling passion for opposition prevailing even in death.

It was Grace who always greeted the arriving guest: if a familiar, in boisterous and hearty fashion, giving and receiving a few broadsides of banter before he settled down, so to speak, into his proper place. It was wonderful, too, to see her at breakfast distributing huge dishes of eggs and bacon and fried trout and answering half a dozen queries as to dried stockings and greased boots with prompt decision. It was still more wonderful when we were all departing to our divers stretches of water to see her handing out the luncheon packets. She knew exactly what sort of "a piece" each fisherman liked to "hae awa' wi' him" and exactly how each one fancied his sandwiches cut. She had a master mind, and when there was chaff going she generally had

the last word, and that a trenchant one. Lastly, it was she who presented his account to the parting guest, a little scrawl that would make the present-day angler of limited purse reflect with sorrow that he had been born into the world a couple of generations too late. Larry and I would as a rule go far afield up-stream, or occasionally up one or other of the big tributary burns, into wild glens, where the nesting grouse were vocal and the curlews filled the air with their wild cries. The woody gorges lower down the river at Abbey come back to me rather from much later days, when the freshness of youth with its dreams, its doubts and occasional qualms had long vanished or been solved for good or ill.

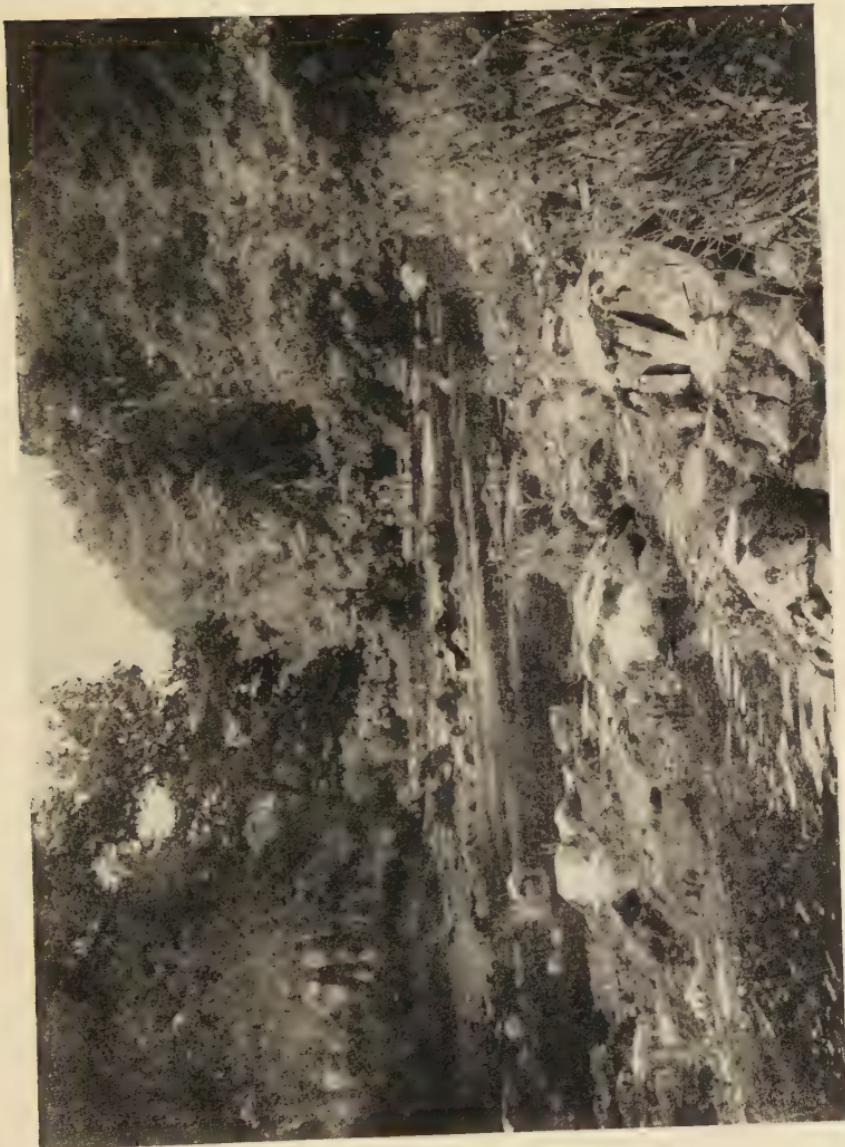
Now in those days there were but four or five packs of otter hounds in all England and Wales, and only one, I think, in Scotland. This was kept by a lean, wiry, six-foot septuagenarian in the outskirts of Edinburgh, whence he harried the otters of the Border counties. Upright as a dart, with narrow shoulders, lean body and limbs and a smooth-shaven, almost copper-coloured face, we used to liken him to a strand of copper wire. We first made his acquaintance on the East Lothian Tyne, that beautiful Low Country trout stream of which I have said nothing lest I should forget the main purpose of these pages is not to discuss angling. The name of this tough old sportsman, like that of his well-known South-country contemporary of the Hawkstone pack, was Hill. In the stillness of the night and the small hours of the dawn his hound-van used to crawl over the roads of Lothian to break at sunrise the solitudes of some distant stream and wake its echoes in the first fresh of the morning. Some said he slept in the van, others that he walked behind it all night. I can believe even the latter: for his years, his endurance was phenomenal. He wasted no breath on words. Besides his one hunt servant he had no regular following. These two in their blue serge coats with a touch of red facing were all the hunt. Anyone was welcome to go out with him, but I cannot imagine the old man recognizing any kind of hunt

membership or the like, as became the custom later. He was said, though with what truth I know not, to be a recluse at home, neither visiting nor encouraging visitors, and even by the river side he was rather disconcerting in his reserve. He rarely accepted local hospitality like normal masters of hounds, but slept in an inn when necessary, if not in his van ! I remember on one occasion his putting up for a night at the *Trout Inn*. Its sociable inmates did not get much change out of him, and when one ingenuous wight asked quite innocently if he had killed many otters that morning, it put an end to all further attempts at speech.

But then no one save its actual followers knew anything at all about the sport in those days, and these were few. Hounds threw off soon after sunrise. There were no eleven o'clock meets, no lunch hampers, no carriages, nor ladies, no photographs nor social junketings, as may be imagined seeing the untoward hour at which these merrymakers would have had to abandon their homes and beds. It was strange that an Englishman, which this old gentleman happened to be, should have kept the only pack of otter hounds in Scotland, as I think it was. It was rumoured that he had been a parson in former days. He might have been a bishop for any improper utterances or hasty words that ever passed his lips, though I certainly never heard him discuss theology. Indeed, he never discussed anything on the march but hounds and rivers. We first made his acquaintance at five o'clock on a June morning at Hailes Castle on the Tyne, an historic ruin, where Bothwell, to whom it belonged, halted with Queen Mary on his flight with her to Dunbar. None of us, I fear, on this occasion were thinking of the hapless Queen or the brutalities of her abductor, least of all the master of the pack, whose impatient voices were echoing against its ivy-covered walls.

Larry was very anxious to see some otter hunting. Though a hard rider he was also very much of a "hound man," as he was to show in after life. As for me, I had been out once or twice as a boy with the Hawkstone hounds and had heard so much of Collier's pack in Devonshire, I was curious

ON THE WHITEADDER



to see something more of this little-known sport. The old man thawed a bit to Larry, recognizing him as on terms with hounds, by which we all benefited to the extent of a postcard when he was coming within reach of us. I went out with him several times in the next two years, not so much from any passion for hunting the otter as for the sake of seeing new waters and new country under pleasant and companionable conditions, for there were always some half-dozen or so of the riverside people out, keepers and farmers. None of the lairds or their families seemed to realize the existence of otter hunting. But the old master did not care two straws whether anyone followed him or not. He was after otters, and his whole heart was with his hounds, a full and beautiful pack, many of them of the Hawkstone blood, while some came from France.

I think the hard-bitten veteran melted to us young fellows a little, particularly when we went with him on one or two distant quests, one in particular to the higher waters of Tweed above Peebles, where Hope put him up with his hounds at a shooting box and sheep farm his father owned there. On another occasion, when going to hunt the Eye, the hound-van had somehow gone astray at Drem, and the whole pack were bundled unceremoniously into one of the long, open third-class carriages which happened to be empty, together with their master, his whip and ourselves. We travelled thus for an hour along the main line to Grants House amid a terrific pandemonium, and to the great edification of the rest of the train and the folks at the way-side stations. Another day, on the Leader in Lauderdale, a hard-pressed otter had run into a covered drain and a spade was required. One was soon fetched by a rustic working near by. From some mischance the spade broke in the digging operations, at which the owner looked or was presumed to look rather rueful. Hope touched him on the shoulder, and in a kindly reassuring tone intimated that he should be no loser by the accident. The brutal honesty of the Lowland hind was delightfully exhibited in eight words, "It disna matter a damn, it's no mine."

Mr. Hill, like his Hawkstone namesake, "The Major," used occasionally to take his hounds over to Ireland. It was some two or three years later that I had a letter from Larry to the effect that he had been awakened in his bed on a recent summer morning by the astonishing cry of hounds on the stream below his house, a thing unprecedented. He knew it must be otter hounds, yet there was not a pack then in all Ireland. So he flung on some clothes and hastened down to the stream, where to his amazement he ran into old Mr. Hill, as hale and tough as ever, who, in his turn, so Larry declared, was quite startled out of his habitual phlegm by this entirely unexpected encounter in the heart of Ireland.

Now a Scottish author, in referring not long ago to the *Bride of Lammermoor*, remarked that on his visits to Germany before the war he found his acquaintances there nearly always curious about the scenery in which the tragedy was laid. Whether the scenes in the opera of *Lucia*, once very popular, or the descriptions and illustrations in the novel had thus stirred them, I do not know. But I had always felt like that myself. I had read all the Waverleys in certain quiet years of my youth on the wilds of Exmoor, and Exmoor had, of course, served my fancy admirably for the Lammermuirs, while Wolfe's Crag had perched itself beneath the neighbouring grim cliffs about Lynton. Even had Fast Castle not been generally accepted as the scene of old Caleb Balderstone's humours and the Master of Ravenswood's despair and death, I think I should have found my way to it. For I knew that it clung to the cliffs of St. Abbs Head, and that great promontory thrust out into the North Sea was clearly visible though distant from almost anywhere in our neighbourhood. It was plain to the eye, too, that it was the eastern horn of the long Lammermuir range dropping abruptly and from a great height into the sea. Its very outline from afar suggested every possibility of grand scenery, yet I could find no one who had been there or knew anything about it. But there, at any rate, was the ordnance map with the object of my

curiosity marked plain upon the coast. Obviously, too, our little inn at Grants House, some half a dozen miles inland, was as good as any point of approach to it.

So Larry and I took train and went down there for the night, putting in some previous hours' fishing on the Eye. Larry failed me in the morning. The trout had been rising too well, but he was punished by the sudden shift to a high east wind. Moreover, the *Bride* was not his particular fancy among the novels as it was mine. The inn people had never been to Fast Castle, but they knew its direction. So, walking coastwards over a few bleak upland pastures, I was soon on Coldingham moor and among the grouse. Beyond and ahead rose the high ridges which obviously overhung the sea—on this bleak, blustering day a lonely enough looking country and well fitted to the spirit of the place I was seeking. There was only one farm in all this cliff region. I knew its name and that it lay above and behind the Castle. Indeed, it was prominent enough, perched up at the head of a dip in the cliffs. My knock at the door brought out a young woman, who gave quite a jump at seeing a stranger. When I asked her the way to Fast Castle I think she thought I was daft, and eyed me with no little suspicion. For the ruin was not, then at least an object of pilgrimage, like Tantallon or Bamborough upon this North-east Coast. Possibly a few enthusiasts may have come round on a calm sea by boat, but it was quite evident from the surprise of the farmer's wife or daughter that visitors were not within her experience.

But to-day half a gale was blowing off the North Sea, and the phantoms of Edgar Ravenswood and Lucy Ashton were riding on it for me. Nothing, indeed, could have been more in keeping with Scott's grim tragedy than the grim scene, when following down the grassy hollow I found myself at the edge of the precipice within a stone's throw of "Wolfe's Crag." The remains of the castle were scanty, and perched on the summit of an outstanding pulpit rock which on three sides dropped sheer into the sea. An outer wall remained, skilfully worked in to the brink of the precip-

pice, and some few fragments of upstanding masonry. The whole summit of the rock was not more than a hundred feet long and of lesser width. It was not, however, the shattered fabric, either in its past perfection or present ruin, that for the moment held me, but its almost terrifying site as an abode for human beings. Yet even then I did not realize that for generations, little companies of men, nobles, soldiers and even ladies for shorter or longer periods had sojourned here. Still it was not for their sakes, as I knew nothing about them, that I adventured on this first visit, but for the fictitious heroes and heroines of my youthful dreams.

As I have said, it was a grim scene, and a high wind was blowing under a dour brooding sky, so I found the sea thundering awesomely against the dark cliffs that rose sheer and high above the castle rock. To reach this last from the cliff edge I had to traverse a narrow ledge, a sort of natural bridge only three or four feet wide. Fortunately it was short, some fifteen or twenty feet perhaps. In fine weather no reasonably steady head would flinch at it, but in half a gale it was another matter, while a mis-step meant an eighty-foot drop into the roaring deep. So, being alone, I pocketed my pride and crawled over on hands and knees. It was across this chasm in old days that the drawbridge swung from castle to cliff. When out among the ruins the scene was savage and tumultuous enough. Beetling cliffs towered high above my head and stretched southward to the verge of sight, to St. Abbs Head itself. The sea with terrific tumult was roaring and churning over its reef-strewn bed, leaping up the cliffs in sheets of foam, and booming with a roar like big guns into the caves and coves that underlay their base. One could well understand on such a day why mariners gave these St. Abbs cliffs so wide a berth, as they sailed south out of the Firth of Forth. Short shrift would any vessel meet with that failed to clear these headlands and was driven into such a chaos as that which now seethed beneath their grizzly precipices. The spray was flying even up on this castle rock.

To deny that I felt a bit creepy on this lonesome eyrie amid such a pandemonium would be to deny all sense of feeling. But it was splendid. To north or south or inland there was not a sign of human life or habitation. Sir Archibald Geikie, the famous geologist, has written some pregnant words on "these highest sea cliffs on the eastern seaboard of Britain. We see from their wasted and worn look," he writes, "what a sore battle they have had to fight with the ocean. Craggy rocks, isolated stacks and sunken wherries that once formed part of the line of cliff are now enveloped by the restless waves. Long twilight caves haunted by otters and seamews and flocks of rock pigeons have been hollowed out of the flat carboniferous sandstone and are daily filled by the tides. In storms these vast precipices from base to summit are buried in foam. The pebbles and boulders, even in the little sheltered beaches, are rolled back by the recoil of the breakers, and are hurled forward again with almost the force and noise of heavy cannon."

And I was lucky enough to see all this! Of course I wondered if the storm that drove Lucy and her father from their hunting on Coldingham moor to this unwelcome shelter with the forbidden lover and the hereditary foe was anything like this, an ominous presage, indeed, of impending doom. I knew nothing then of the actual story of this unique fortress, but was wholly absorbed in the romance that Scott had woven round it. On the next visit I paid, nearly forty years on, I did know a good deal about the other kind of romance attaching to it, the romance of history. Elemental conditions, too, on this second occasion presented a prodigious contrast. It was the most gorgeous day of a fine August. The sea lay unruffled in the sunshine, the heather hung like a crimson curtain to the edge of the less lofty cliffs. The only thing in that great world of sea, sky and shore that struck a dark and sombre note were the higher cliffs that with their northern outlook held the shadows all day long.

Again I was alone, and was glad of it, though it was the height of the holiday season. Dunbar, North Berwick and

even the coast villages were full with an element of summer visitors such as had scarcely existed when I had stood here last. And when I knocked again at the door of Dowlaw farmhouse, to confirm or correct my memory as to the way down, it was opened by an elderly woman. I wondered if she was the young wife who had regarded me as a lunatic in the long ago. Obviously a visit to the ruin was no longer regarded as a sign of mental derangement. It had been made more possible, too, I discovered, by certain road improvements for vehicles to get up from East Lothian to the farm. But I doubt if many visitors of any kind came even then to see what Geikie calls the finest cliff scenery on the whole East Coast of Britain, or, in other words, between Devonshire and the Orkneys. Yet a certain number of people must surely have come here either for Scott or for the majestic scenery, though personally I have never met a soul either in or out of Scotland who has attempted this not very exacting enterprise. Post-war Scotland is unknown to me, so possibly the Dunbar *chars-à-bancs* may by now have vulgarized even Fast Castle, though I doubt it. But the cliff scenery between this and St. Abbs village can only be negotiated by a good deal of stiff and steep walking on the overhanging heights, and I do not think that is a popular form of pastime with this petrol-driven generation. At any rate, on my second visit on this gorgeous August day, as on the first one, there was no sign of life.

I had not to crawl this time over the connecting ridge, but stepped lightly across it and ate my sandwiches amid the scant ruins on this amazing perch. Some of the fabric seemed to me to have disappeared. So it had, as I learnt subsequently. For later in that very year of my first visit it had been struck by lightning, and thirty feet of wall shattered and plunged bodily into the sea below, a dramatic incident, worthy of the scene and place. What a sight the thunderstorm and the falling castle must have been. To-day, if I may take this leap forward over half a lifetime, the cruel cliffs lowering above me were fighting no waves nor yet wreathed in foam. They were looking as genial as can be

expected of any north-fronting precipices that glower in shadow nearly all day long. About their feet were strewn in the gently heaving green water that lapped their base all the cruel rocks and reefs that the strife of ages had torn from their steeps. The North Sea was now at peace to the far horizon, and as it approached the shore was only uttering that gentle growl inseparable from the swing even of an unruffled tide over so broken and jagged a floor. For a full half mile out to sea looking down from the castle rock, in the bright sunshine, one could clearly mark the long lines of sunken reefs, hideous barriers that threatened destruction to any craft so unfortunate as to be blown into their cruel jaws. Along the sharp ridges of the rocky promontories thrust out here and there into the quiet deep, sat snow-white sea birds in long rows, like strings of pearls.

Westward from the castle, towards the low, red-rimmed East Lothian shore, the dark cliffs sank lower, but for a mile or two a broad belt of heather hung over their summits, in the very height of its perfect bloom, looking, with the sun on it, like a streak of fire. Beyond this purple foreground to the westward, the last four miles of the high St. Abbs coastline dropped gradually to the bend, beyond which the shores of East Lothian could be seen, laying their low, curving, red ramparts against the blue sea. Dunbar, its site at least, was visible and the Bass Rock, grim and massive like some uncanny monster squatting on the calm sea, while its neighbour, the sharp cone of North Berwick Law, marked far away the lost line of the shore. All along the northern horizon, beyond the expanding Firth, rolled the high and billowy coast of Fife, while in mid-sea the desolate Isle of May spread her low shores.

This is no place for the true story of the castle, but having brought the reader to it in both fair weather and foul I may state in brief that it was an object of English and Scottish strife throughout the Middle Ages. A dozen men, the saying ran, could hold it against all Scotland. Nothing but starvation or a ruse could or ever did capture it. In Tudor times, despite its weird situation, it became an official

house of call for great personages travelling between London and Edinburgh. But then the old North Road till quite recently lay across Coldingham moor, so to the horseback travellers of former days it was but a three-mile detour to Fast Castle. Queen Margaret rested there on her journey north to marry James IV. Various ambassadors and envoys have left descriptions and notes of wonder at such an uncanny resting-place. It mounted cannon, too, and fired salutes to those entitled to them, who sometimes complained of the deafening roar of the guns against the cliffs. It was even implicated in the Gowrie conspiracy and in a scheme to bring James VI there and hold him prisoner. Soon after the union of the Crowns, however, Fast Castle lapsed as a military post. As a country house or a seaside residence it may be readily imagined that it had small attraction for the various Homes, Logans and others who successively inherited it. So it was abandoned, not to the conventional bats and owls, but to the angry sea wrack and the screaming sea-fowls, and gradually subsided into the utter desolation and aloofness from the world in which I found it on that stormy day more than half a century ago.

CHAPTER IX

A SHEEP FARM AND SHEEP FARMERS

NOW Fentonbarns had rather close ties with Canada. Mr. Hope's brother had gone there early in life and built up a prosperous business in one of the principal towns of Ontario, that Paradise of Scotsmen. Some of his family happened at this season to be paying a long visit at Fentonbarns. Moreover, one or two leading Canadian agriculturalists, besides other well-known men from overseas or the Continent, paid short visits of curiosity to the famous farm, with some of whom we were brought in touch. Then the Bertrams themselves had a very close connection with Canada. Like father like son, for all three sons of this sterling family, two of them by now middle-aged, had been established for many years in the country and had prospered greatly, both in retail and wholesale trade. The elder was now M.P. for his county at Ottawa, and would have been in the Cabinet had he not inherited the rigid scrupulousness of his father and refused adhesion to some measure of his party that he disapproved.

Several of these Canadian relatives visited their old home in this year, and there was, of course, much talk of land, business and prospects out there, which interested me a good deal. It was not common in those days to meet business men from the Colonies in private life. Mine, however, for the moment was but an abstract interest. Later on it developed into something more. Old Hugh had always held forth a good deal on "Connody." He was rightly proud of his sons. One or more of the girls, too, had been over there visiting and one had accompanied Miss

Hope in a like venture. They were wrecked going out and also coming back, a rather unique experience, and both times in steamers of the Allan Line, which were having just then a notorious run of ill-luck. In the first disaster, off Nova Scotia, half the passengers and crew were drowned ; the second off Ireland, though serious, was not so fatal. Hugh Bertram himself had not then the faintest notion that he was to lay his own bones and spend his last years in Canada, comfortably experimenting on a small farm of his son's and denouncing in familiar and trumpet tones the scandalous farming of his half-amused and half-indignant Canadian neighbours. He looked forward at this time, I am sure, to expending his last breath in the service of his master, or maybe of his master's son, at Fentonbarns. But then no one knew the blow that was shortly to fall. Nor for my part could I have imagined that I was to meet the old man again in those far-off scenes and hear him hold forth in his old way on the "purely redeeklus" and "maist heinous" methods of the Ontario farmers, as they seemed to him. But so it was, for such are the chances and changes of this mortal life.

Our pleasant party at the old farmhouse broke up that year, '72, to scatter in our various far-sundered paths, Larry and Philip to their ancestral homes, Billy, half crippled by a first visitation of rheumatic gout, to find his health again eventually in the far East. We parted with much regret and with the limited outlook of the young, not yet quite conscious of how small the world is, as we doubtless thought for ever. We had been of necessity on very close and intimate terms, and had had much to interest and amuse us that cannot be set down here, nor had any breath of discord disturbed our cheerful circle. Hope, too, only three or four years our senior, had been almost one of us, so we bid each other a sad farewell for ever and aye ! Twenty-five years later I was out shooting with Larry at his Irish home when he was seized with the illness that killed him, and Hope and I remained friends till his death a year ago, while as for Philip, though many counties divide us in our

old age, with him and his I have been fast friends all my life and we correspond regularly.

For my part I was by no means ready to leave Scotland. I was anxious to see something of sheep farming in the hills and, if the truth be told, something more of the country generally, to which I had become much attached. So I went to live with a farmer whose acquaintance I had made, near Dunbar. He had a moderate-sized farm of some 300 acres of the finest Dunbar red land, paying something over £4 an acre, and living there in a comfortable roomy house approached, I remember, by a most beautiful avenue of limes. My chief attraction, however, was a large sheep farm he held on the nearer slope of the Lammermuir about ten miles off, for I had now acquired a horse. The said farmer, whom I will call Deans, was a very nice fellow of about forty, of fine physical proportions, if of a rather less educated and refined a type than the Hopes, but of a genial habit and great integrity in all his doings. He took things much easier than they did at Fentonbarns. His land lay in the picked belt of the Lothians, and he held it under Lord Haddington. The great, red, turreted pile of Tynningham Castle lay just across the estuary of the Tyne to which the farm extended. Beyond it the famous Tynningham woods spread all round and about, a lasting reminder of the eighteenth-century Scottish renaissance in planting and agriculture. It is not merely that the then owner, the sixth Lord, despite local jeers and gibes, planted in all 800 acres of barren waste, but he imported woodsmen and labourers all the way from Dorsetshire to show him how to do it and execute the work. Contemporary writers say that it was her ladyship who was the inspiring angel of these and other works. My lord, she thought, was too much engrossed by sport, while she herself was devoted to trees. She converted him, however, so completely that he made a whole half-barren countryside bloom like the rose. He imported farmers from the South of England to teach the natives, and "from these," he says, "we came to a knowledge of sowing and of grass seeds." Fancy East Lothian

going to Dorsetshire to learn farming ! Scotland too—I do not mean merely the Highlands, for nobody then went there or desired to : it was hardly safe before the '45—but the Scotland the world then knew was the nakedest country in Europe. English and foreign visitors were alike amazed at its bareness. To-day great parts of East Lothian are very bare, but that is the bareness of high farming, not sterility.

Mrs. Deans, too, was a very nice woman and comparatively young. She came of a well-known farming and mercantile family, kept a good table, a couple of servants and a quite nicely appointed house. She and her sister sang Scottish songs at the piano, and we all played *loo* every night when alone for mild stakes, not the “unlimited” variety which the East Lothian farmers when making a night of it indulged in. Relations and friends from Edinburgh or distant farms used to “call by” for meals or a bed. It was all intensely Scottish. Of course, it was. But what I mean is that to all these highly intelligent folk England might have been a thousand miles away, instead of thirty. That Edinburgh was the centre of everything for them was natural enough, but there was much more to it than that. No reference or allusion to anything or anybody south of Tweed passed their lips in a month of days. In a negative sense it was almost a foreign country. And these people were not common farmers, or there would have been nothing in it. They were amongst the foremost exponents of scientific agriculture in Great Britain and necessarily capitalists. Their connections, too, as above noted, were in wholesale trade and the minor professions. They were well-to-do middle-class folk. And yet their landlords of their own race and of their own soil were in speech and outlook and range of interests as English as a Norfolk squire. Indeed, a consciousness that this was so helped, I think, to a touch of prejudice the farmers had against their landlords. Unreasonable, no doubt, but yet human enough. There was no give and take between landlord and tenant, as they were both bound by long

leases and the situation was more strictly commercial than in England, where, speaking generally, long leases were unusual and disliked. But there always appeared to me to be more of a barrier between these great tenants and their great landlords than mere caste made inevitable.

Deans belonged to a family very typical of the country and period. His father still held a large farm near Edinburgh, and had put four of his sons into good farms at the cost of some £5000 apiece. For £12 an acre was regarded as the necessary equipment for entering a farm in that country, as against the usually quoted £8 in England. He was a strange, forcible and hard old man and no respecter of persons. "I like you, Deans," said his Lammermuir landlord, a youngish, quick-tempered man, "but d—n your father." There had been dealings between them. I sympathised with the laird. Deans, senior, was a shortish, powerful man with long arms, hard, searching eyes and an aggressive, roughish manner. He had prided himself on his physical strength and athletic powers. He had been able to jump a five-barred gate standing and carry sacks of corn about like packets of tea. On the first introduction he felt your biceps and punched your thigh as if to test whether you were worth knowing. He was of the type that believed all Englishmen to be weakly sort of creatures, and would have spoken of them naturally as a people, though he had known hardly any, as "wee Englishmen." There were quite a number of provincial Scotsmen like him in those days, and I daresay there are still.

But, as it turned out, I spent a good deal of my time away up at the Lammermuir farm, where a bailiff occupied the house, his wife ministering to my simple wants. This hill farm comprised a thousand or more acres of upland pasture, oats and barley land, fenced with "stane dykes." It gave on to the high moor and an extended sheep walk.

Curiously enough it had been at this very point that

Larry and I had descended from the Lammermuirs on our snowy walk in the previous year. It was a lovely spot. A woody dene musical with the fall of a mountain stream wound its way down from the moor, and a deep ravine fringed the high-lying park in which the mansion of Nunraw was most beautifully set. In late summer the overhanging moors became a blaze of purple against the sky-line. The rich and varied woodlands clinging about their feet and draping the sides of the descending glen completed a picture that I cherished and remembered through all future years. The house, though then recently enlarged, retained its massive Franco-Scottish character and harmonized well with its romantic setting. I made up my mind, and not without reason, that it was the original of Sir Walter's Ravenswood.

Like that ill-fated house of his creation, it stood at the foot of the only travelled pass through the heart of the Lammermuirs. Here, too, dancing through the woody glen below, was the burn beside which Edgar Ravenswood, though no longer of that ilk, plighted his troth to the fair ingenuous daughter of his supplanter. And here below the park was the tributary village and the little kirk which witnessed within the same week the wedding and the funeral of the ill-fated Lucy. I at any rate had quite made up my mind that her dust lay in Garvald kirkyard. The topography of the novel is discussed at intervals in the Scottish press, which at least serves to show the fogginess of most articulate Scotsmen towards this particular corner of their country. But even the knowledgeable have curiously overlooked a single sentence in which Scott tells us almost precisely where his fancy had fixed Ravenswood—and that is here. At any rate, I was perfectly satisfied as to this myself, and somehow it gave a greater glory to the woods and something to the voice of the burn.

But, alas, it is perhaps the privilege of youth alone to feel like this. In later days, as I noted at Fast Castle, it was no longer the fictitious Ravenswood and his immortal serving man that haunted the place, but Queen Margaret

and Hunsdon and Maitland of Lethington and other famous folk of olden time associated with it. I can readily conceive of unimaginative persons finding history dull and being deaf to the past. But that the other sort should proclaim the same want and often with complacency, unless their history is dressed up for them in fiction, passes my comprehension. Scott didn't find history dull; that is quite certain, while it is equally certain that no writer of fiction has illuminated his country's past with a touch so broad and sure and an effect so lasting and far-reaching. The "Scott country" in guide books means, I think, merely the neighbourhood of Abbotsford. Not that wide region from Fife to the Solway, from Perthshire to Northumberland, that he illuminated in his books. Not long before the war, while staying at Lauder, a stout, middle-aged Californian and family in a big car halted for lunch at my inn. He was on his way to play a round of golf at St. Andrews, not as an experienced golfer, but as a victim of the then new craze on the Pacific coast. The pilgrimage was a sort of pious rite to be "taken in" on passing through Britain. He was asking everyone, including the "Boots," the distance to St. Andrews. Now Lauder is some twenty miles south of Edinburgh. It would be much like asking the natives of Reigate or Sevenoaks the distance to Cromer with London in between. He was surprised that Edinburgh sprawled across his path and wanted to know if it "was worth taking in." I had casually asked him by what route he had come. He did not know, except that he had breakfasted at Newcastle, but turned to his chauffeur son, who replied: "By Melrose." "You came through the Scott country, then," said someone. "I don't know whose country it was, sir," observed this obsessed golfing pilgrim, with Northumberland doubtless in his mind, "but it was a mighty bare one anyway." The last I heard of him was a final enquiry of the "Boots" as the latter slammed the door of the departing car: "How far is it to St. Andrews?" and the "Boots'" curt reply as if to a wholly fatuous question: "I dinna ken."

I had now acquired a little grey mare from a young Australian, who had been in the country taking stock of Scottish agricultural methods. She was the best hack I ever owned or rode, and it fell to me a little later to travel for many years and for many thousands of miles on horseback. At a shake of the rein or a word she went away at a fast trot and so easy a gait one could almost sit down to it, and never slackened till pulled in. Nor did she ever perpetrate the faintest shade of a stumble over the roughest roads. Out of the stable she was as gentle as a lamb, within it she was a fiend, kicking at all and sundry. Though the refusal of ostlers in Dunbar and Haddington and other stablemen to take her out of a stable once they had put her in gave me endless trouble, to say nothing of some hair-breadth escapes, she was worth it. Thirty odd years afterwards I ran across a middle-aged farmer on Tweedside who announced himself as the little son of my erst friend and host Deans, whom I remembered trotting about the farm at his father's heels. One of the vivid recollections of his childhood, he declared, was a hole in the ceiling of the stable that his father used to point out to his friends as having been made by the heels of this astonishing mare of mine. I never loved a horse so much out of the stable and never, thank goodness, had another so fearsome within it. She gave me of her very best every minute, almost without being asked to on the longest rides. Eventually she went at auction in Edinburgh and like the American humorist's yellow horse that kicked everyone but the cross-eyed man who upset his calculations every time, "I was not asked to the funeral."

By good luck I had been previously acquainted with the then laird who sat in the seat, as it pleased me to think, of the ill-fated Ravenswood. He was youngish and a bachelor, living at the big house with a younger sister. My farmhouse was but a half-mile away, and so walking back betimes at midnight after a late smoke and a glass at the house, and when peradventure the moon was riding high above the Lammermuir and the black shadows of the

trees were falling on the ground about my path, I used to look out for the wraith of the fair young bride of a day, the poor gibbering maniac in her white shift red with Bucklaw's blood. But the property has passed from these, its old owners, many a long year now. Though of ancient name and family, when I was last there the very villagers had forgotten them. The laird of my day was not much interested either in agriculture or sport, but was very friendly and hospitable. In my quarters at the farmhouse the steward and his wife, a good motherly soul, used to help to pass such evenings as I spent there, when I chose to invade their domestic privacy in the kitchen. He was a good type of his class with a fair share of dry humour and a fine rich speech in which to clothe it. I still remember a story he had to tell of a neighbouring keeper, I think at Biel. The man was a newcomer from some far county and knew nothing as yet of the local deities. It was a great shoot at which many of the latter were present, but through some passing emergency it fell to the new keeper to place the guns. He had been given a list in which appeared the name of one of the Haddington family, which the reader may be reminded is Baillie-Hamilton. So when the anxious keeper had disposed of His Grace of this and His Lordship of that and three or four more with some title to distinguish them, he turned to the surviving gun, Mr. Baillie-Hamilton, with a condescending wave of the hand : " Well, Baillie, come you along wi' me. You and I'll jes' walk through wi' the beaters." Need I note that Baillie is the Scots equivalent of town councillor or alderman, and the poor man thought that some such a one from Haddington or Dunbar had found his way into this august circle.

My bailiff, too, was as fond of humming and singing as so many other of my Scottish acquaintances, and like them, of course, he always sang Scottish songs. I used to hear him through the kitchen door at nights, as he sat over the peat fire opposite his homely wife, busy with her knitting or mending. It used to sound quite touching in the silence of the lonely little farmhouse when he sang in his gruff

voice, which he constantly did, as if invoking the partner of his joys and sorrows :

“ O wert thou in the cauld blast
On yonder lea, on yonder lea,
My plaidie from the angry airt
Wad shelter thee, wad shelter thee.

“ Or were I in the desert waste
Sae bleak and bare, sae bleak and bare,
The desert were a paradise
If thou wert there, if thou wert there.”

I recall the lines from memory only, though I think correctly. But my friend's repertoire was extensive.

We had mostly Cheviots on the farm and black-faced sheep upon the moor. Shearing was a great function, and Deans used to give a new bonnet to the best performer. The Lammermuir shepherds had and still have a great reputation. All through the Northumbrian and Durham hills a Lammermuir “ herd ” is his own advertisement and guarantee. Many of them were readers and had profited by the teaching of the Scottish schoolmasters of olden days, who taught Classics and advanced Mathematics to the ambitious boys, and the ambitious were then numerous. The small village libraries in those days contained the sort of books that men thus trained would read. Nowadays Scottish and English education in country schools and their results are, I am told, on a par, and one of the results is the wholesale reading of trash, of lurid novelettes and rubbishy magazines. The love of letters in the country parishes has practically died out. It could not hold out against the fare which makes every railway bookstall look like a tawdry flower-bed.

The minister of this remote village was an attractive young man, who looked like a cavalry subaltern, and was said to waltz as well as any of them, a rather daring venture in those days, though a secret recommendation to the big farmers' ladies. His brother held the adjoining parish, which their father had before them. They were of a good Scottish family and socially men of the world, a combination

not very common by that time in the Church of Scotland. I knew them both slightly even then. By a mere coincidence I saw a good deal of both brothers in our comparative old age—the younger, who in an important East Lothian parish, despite his good looks, dancing, culture and real personal charm, had remained a bachelor through life, to the despair, it was said, of all the local fair; the other still occupied the paternal manse and had a family. Both were well qualified to trace from personal experience the change of outlook and habit in the working class since the simple days when I first knew them, days as I have already said when porridge and milk was the basis of the cotter's menage. The old desire and respect for learning seems to have declined with its substitute of anæmic baker's bread and stewed tea and the advent of what an old Berwickshire post-mistress of character once described to me with contempt as "*Charity schulin.*" The pride in paying their school pence, and what they got for it, had been very real with her generation.

A roughish mountain road shot straight up from our top-most steading, at which the hill flock was handled, for many hundred feet; the same road, as related, that we had travelled on foot in the snow on our premature fishing trip. I was now to ride over it very often under pleasanter conditions, for it led out into the Merse of Berwickshire and the Tweedside country. The top of the pass was near to our side. In a bog below the road was the fountain spring of the burn that descended, as above mentioned, through the Nunraw woods to pursue its picturesque and lively way by wood and park, by copse and red fallow, by the Whittingham, Biel and Belton estates to the sea, near Dunbar. On this high crown of wild road some 1200 feet above sea level a mere traveller might give thanks for the glorious outlook vouchsafed him. But a ten minutes' climb to the pointed height above it provided one better still. There on a fine summer day I would stand, perhaps, with one of the shepherds or maybe lie stretched on the heather alone and feel that I had never elsewhere looked upon so glorious

a view. I had been familiar for years of boyhood with the outlook from the top of Exmoor extending from Dartmoor, in the south, over the Severn Sea to Cornwall and to the Welsh mountains, which easily surpasses anything that our other southern counties for obvious reasons could pretend to. And this seemed to me, and to-day seems to me, to be greater even than that finest of prospects in South-west England.

For in the north far beyond the Ochill mountains of Stirlingshire lay the faint line of the Grampians, while on the southern horizon the Northumbrian Cheviots loomed quite large against the sky. Glance at a map, dear reader, if one is handy, and see what this means. And our hill was only about 1500 feet. Then beneath us and away north and eastward the two noble Lothian counties, radiant in their rich and varied colouring, spread like a carpet from our feet to the wide sheen of the Firth of Forth. And beyond the widening Firth the whole kingdom of Fife with its uplifted coastal hills rolled eastward, to sink far away in haze into the North Sea. And almost in the very heart of all this, marked by the lion form of Arthur's Seat and a faint smoke cloud, lay Scotland's capital with the Pentlands rising in its rear. Westward was a wild sea of tossing moorland, for the Lammermuirs are a far-spreading range. But beyond its furthest edge, the loftier heights of Peeblesshire, where the upper waters of Tweed and Clyde can almost hear one another, rise dim but boldly. Just think of it! The Perthshire Grampians in the north, the Northumbrian Cheviots in the south, the hills of Peebles and Lanarkshire in the far west, the furthest capes of Fife upon the east. Yet I read about once a week in the London papers that the view from this or that Surrey hilltop is the finest in the kingdom, that with luck you can see into five counties and even get a glimpse of the Channel. Well! well! why not the Malvern hills, where I have myself seen into sixteen counties, from the mountain ranges of West Wales to Edge Hill in Oxfordshire, and the heart of Shakespeare's England, from the Quantocks and even Exmoor

in the south to the low ridges of Leicestershire in the north-east?

But of this Lammermuir view I have no call to suspect that fond memory either expands or idealizes it, for I have stood here or on neighbouring heights many times with most of life behind me, and though all the freshness and much of the romance when it all lies ahead had, alas, fled, I was better equipped to feel how much of Scottish history and romance was compressed into this wonderful panorama of hill and plain, of sea and mountain. How eloquent was every bit of it of Scotland's past. I felt its significance even then as a lad, though not greatly familiar with its story. But I at least knew my Scottish geography pretty well. Moreover, I had recently been in the Grampians and also in the Peeblesshire and Lanarkshire hills, and, thanks to my little grey mare, was making a near acquaintance with the Cheviot country. So fortunately, as it were, all the dim fringes of this wonderful prospect from our hill farm were in a sense familiar.

Now some six miles along this moorland road lay the homestead of the famous Darling family, which we noted in passing on that snowy day in an earlier chapter. It lay in the very heart of the wild, and the sheep upon a thousand hills appertained to it. Its boundaries marched with our more limited ones. How far they extended to north and south over heathery hills and boggy, stream-furrowed glens I do not know. But the old Mr. Darling of that day, like his forbears for generations, was the tenant of a vast solitude, that in the sheep markets of Edinburgh, Berwick and Kelso and throughout the Low Country was regarded as a place of special character. Most great sheep farmers live at or near the mouth of glens opening out into the lowland, their territories spreading into space behind them. But Priestlaw was in the very heart of the moors, and many miles on either side from a road that could, in those days, be travelled comfortably on wheels.

So Mr. Darling, chief Nabob among the sheep Nabobs, reigned in solitude. But horsemen and occasionally a

bolder spirit in a gig passed backwards and forwards in the way of business, and it was his rule and pleasure that no one should pass his door without refreshment. If you had but a mere nodding acquaintance with this aristocrat of the waste, to give Priestlaw the go-by would assuredly forfeit even so slight a recognition. His hospitality was even retrospective. If introduced to a stranger and it leaked out that he had ever passed by Priestlaw, the old gentleman's manner seemed to cool as if he was hurt even at this. As living on a neighbour's farm, as neighbourhood counted up there, it would have been a deadly insult on my part to have so outraged the traditions of the house, even had I been so disposed, as assuredly I was not. For as a very young man I felt it a privilege to know so famous a character.

The soft, unmetalled red road leading there very soon struck the watershed, and tapped the source of the White-adder. Thence, cut in the hillside, it followed the gathering waters of that winsome stream till they tumbled in full current beneath the very windows of this seat of almost terrifying hospitality. It was a beautiful ride in summer time. From start to finish there was not a sign of human life. It used to remind me of that moorland road on Exmoor which followed the Barle from near its source down to Simonsbath, and so often travelled through the years of boyhood. But this one was even wilder and more solitary, and while the moor grass prevailed on Exmoor, here it was mainly heather, deep heather too. For there was no systematic burning in those days. The guns in August walked behind setters and got but moderate bags. Driving was not practised. There were no butts against the skyline such as you may see now on these hills—always, I think, rather a blot on moorland scenery. All is, of course, now altered, and the bags are four or five times as great.

It is worth noting, too, that whereas the hares on these hills were of the ordinary variety, they have been since invaded, to the disgust of sportsmen, by a steady migration of the blue mountain variety from the Highlands, till by

1914 I think they had almost driven the indigenous stock down into the Low Country. Now this is a long way to come, and many a belt of low tillage country to cross on the way. Why after all these centuries should these undesirable Highlanders have suddenly made the great adventure southwards? But there were plenty of grouse even then to swell the clamour of the waste in the breeding season and join the more melodious chorus that filled the air in these summer days. The long trilling notes and wild call of the curlews, the plaintive wail of the ever-anxious and restless peewits, the rarer whistle of the goldies, the joyous song of the skylarks, and the neighbourly tweet-tweet of the meadow pipit, who persistently belies his name by his passion for the high and wild places of the land. And there, too, ever and always was the music of the stream below, growing louder with each mile as spouting rills from the heights above gurgled into it over their black, peaty troughs.

Now a dram and a few minutes' crack on a morning's ride into Berwickshire with the keen-eyed sentinel of Priestlaw was all very well. And if he was not there his good-looking, stalwart son, who had fully inherited the family virtue, would be assuredly on the look-out. But if you were within an hour of a meal there was no hope of getting either backward or forward. As for me, when out for a day's fishing, though occasionally I went on to Ellemford, I preferred the more secluded Priestlaw water apart from the fact of its being much nearer my quarters. This meant dinner at the house, and at the unholy hour for an angler of four o'clock. The old gentleman quite looked his part, too, arrayed in a swallow tail morning coat, a garment even then almost extinct, and a high white neckcloth. His manners were a blend of old world punctilio and hearty warmth. It was a plain, roomy old house, with a fir plantation on the windward side to temper, no doubt, the ferocity of the winter storms that swept these high, bleak latitudes. There was nearly always company at these admirable though untimely repasts; it was the pleasure and tradition of the House of

Priestlaw to offer to the wayfarer of even the slightest acquaintance. There would be a farmer or two perhaps from East Lothian, a seed merchant from Edinburgh, an auctioneer from Berwick. And after dinner, with the removal of the cloth, came an almost more serious function than the meal itself, then pretty general in the big farm-houses.

For now arrived the urn, the rummers, the smaller glasses, the sugar and the silver ladles, and not least the decanters containing whisky such as this generation of Scotsmen have never tasted. Nor in truth do they know anything of the mysterious vessels for its consumption here enumerated, and essential to the convivial rites of their forebears. Long ago I saw them more than once exhibited in glass cases as heirlooms ! But this present-day whisky wouldn't be worthy of such ritual and such vessels. The Scotsman of to-day, so far as I have seen, tosses it off with soda water just like any ordinary Englishman. Nor does he drink any more of it than his southern neighbour. The "twelve tumbler men," stout fellows, that once swarmed in the land had almost gone before the war—not from the tumblers, not at all ! but from mere length of years. Edinburgh, on New Year's Day, was once almost an orgy. It is now, I believe, as sober on that national holiday as Exeter, let us say, or Norwich at Christmas time. To get safely through those after-dinner séances at Priestlaw, at which, of course, none of the guests, who were all scratch or plus players at the game, turned a hair, required some management on my inexperienced part. For the old gentleman had a keen eye for "idling." Nor was he precisely the man to hurry up the ordering of a guest's horse or trap. My mare's grievous stable habits for once in a way stood me in good stead, as I had to go and get her out myself, which greatly aided my timely escape before serious mischief could be done.

But I must tell the sad tale of how I fell, through no fault of my own, into such disgrace with the old gentleman, that had I been staying on another season I doubt if I could have faced him. Now it fell about that the laird, who had

no great turn for sport but could fish a little, was inspired by my example to accompany me one day to Priestlaw. He was not a horseman, so we were to drive and risk the breaking of a spring. He had never been to Priestlaw or met its famous occupant, and was not quite the man, perhaps, to hit it off with a character of that type and class. Still I had given him to understand, or thought I had, that dinner at the house was a *sine qua non* for the accommodation of horse and trap, so we started off in a sort of four-wheeled phaeton with the coachman on the box. I was hardly prepared for this, and our prospects seemed dubious, as water furrows crossed the twisting road about every fifty yards. But I was much more concerned to find that the laird had come to regard this as a picnic rather than a fishing trip, and disregarding my warning had put a big hamper of luxuries on the box. I now almost hoped we should break down. But we didn't, though we passed, I remember, the rash occupants of a wagonette, four disconsolate would-be anglers, sitting by the roadside in the heart of the waste, and gazing helplessly at a broken wheel. I couldn't get my companion to forgo his picnic, or to realize the predicament in which we should be placed.

The horse and trap were fortunately taken and housed at once on arrival. But then I had to go indoors with my companion and introduce him to the old gentleman, who naturally knew all about him and welcomed him, though I fancied just a wee bit stiffly—I heard afterwards there had been some quarrel in a former generation. But that was nothing to the painful scene, when on the dinner hour being mentioned after the usual fashion, the laird explained that he had brought his food with him. I had fondly but vainly hoped that he might have saved the situation by explaining that he had come out for the sole purpose of a picnic. But he fumbled, and then the fat was in the fire ! The old man drew himself up and made some icy remark of a decisive kind that I don't recall, but I remember very clearly, indeed, that it left nothing for us to do but to get out of the house with our tails between our legs.

The horse and trap, however, had secured a footing. So when the hour came, the coachman bore down to the banks of the Whiteadder the most sumptuous repast that I should imagine was ever partaken of beside its wild streams. But even the champagne did not console me for the unfortunate *faux pas* of the morning. I fancy there was something more in the matter than the mere rejecting dinner, bad as that was. The old gentleman, though quite wrongly, may have scented pride on the part of the laird in his rather fumbling rejection of hospitality. I do not know how this may have been, and I never had occasion to pass that way again, or to set eyes on Priestlaw till every member of the household I had known was dead and gone. Its fame as a house of call may be said to have gone back as far as the " '45." For there was an old lady of the family still living, who had heard as a child from the lips of an aunt or mother how she remembered some straggling troopers from Gardiner's routed army at Preston-Pans arriving half starved and exhausted at Priestlaw, and how they were fed and rested there.

Occasionally I put up at the *Trout Inn* at Ellemford, where I kept a change of clothes, fished a bit, and joined the nightly gathering of jolly anglers with their fish romances and songs. Thence I would ride betimes down into the Low Country of Berwickshire, studded with big country houses and farms almost as fine as those of East Lothian, right down to the banks of the Tweed. Three to four shillings an acre was all that these lands had fetched when George III was on the throne, and it was all "open field." Before the death of his son, William IV, they were fetching from two to four pounds! Scores of small farms had been thrown into large ones early in the nineteenth century, though I don't think there was any actual hardship of eviction, and I have read the ample evidence supplied at the time to Government enquiries by the parish ministers. Hundreds of sturdy small farmers and labourers from this and the adjoining counties went to Canada in the eighteen-thirties and forties and prospered wondrously, clearing

the timber from the rich virgin lands of Ontario, and leaving sons and grandsons as a substantial element in the yeomanry of that wealthy province.

Long before my day, however, the great farms of the Merse had been consolidated. There was still plenty of labour. The same capable, decent, well-educated but dour ploughmen drove deep clean furrows in the clean, well-drained fields behind the stalwart Clydesdale teams, as in the Lothians. The same gangs of quaintly clad bondagers, the same groups of cackling Highland lasses, would be hoeing in the wheat or root fields. The farmers went to Berwick market, famous for barley, as the others to Haddington, in broughams or dog-carts, nor do I suppose there was a laird in the county that did not regard his present rent-roll as a fixture till Kingdom come. Substantial stone homesteads, ample steadings with their engine chimneys and rows of one-storeyed, red sandstone tile-roofed labourers' cottages, and crowded stackyards, were all about as in the Lothians.

No Tudor or Jacobean or even Georgian farmhouses adorn these Northern landscapes for the best of reasons. For not much over a century before the days when I first rode about Berwickshire, the ancestors of these prosperous farmers were driving skinny ewes up from poor soggy pastures to be milked, and running primitive ploughs and harrows over sour, undrained and unfenced fallows sometimes even tied to their scraggy horses' tails. What their long-vanished homesteads were like would be ill-saying, so much have they been added to and rebuilt. And the old families of Berwickshire too—the lairds who, in the eighteen-seventies, regarded a London season almost as a matter of course. How far differently were they housed in the times of the two first Georges, even in Walpole's plenteous days. And the ladies ! save with the greater people, unless their own social historians and antiquaries have conspired to belittle their material condition, they were fortunate if they could afford a new Sunday dress once in three years ! But queer old shattered Pele towers and fragments of small

castles stood about here and there in strange contrast to this rich, well-furbished landscape, telling of fierce and bloody doings and raids long before the days of such peaceful economies as their law-abiding descendants had to put up with.

And while speaking of ancient raids on the living, the well-filled kirkyards of the Merse became a favourite hunting-ground in modern times of raiders of the dead, the "Resurrectionists," as they were called. The 'twenties and 'thirties of the last century saw the most of these scandalous doings associated with the infamous names of Burke and Hare. I used to hear some strange stories from a friend in the Merse whose father was a minister, and lived in the body-snatchers' favourite raiding-ground, and consequently much associated with that nightly watching of graveyards which the times made urgent. Here are two of his reminiscences.

In the year 1828 a well-known farmer, after "keeping it up" a bit at Berwick Market, was riding home in the moonlight on the road between Edrom, a large and frequently outraged kirkyard, and the little market town of Duns, when he espied ahead of him a gig with three men on the seat. Jogging along not far behind, his attention was called to the unnatural rigidity of the central figure, and the further fact that the two others were continually talking across it. Suspicion was naturally in the air, and pressing nearer to the trap, he noticed that the middle passenger was dressed in a reefer jacket and had a cloth cap pulled down over his eyes. His stiff attitude gave rise to stronger suspicions, which quickened yet more when the driver, on being thus overtaken, whipped up his horse and went away at a smart pace.

The farmer now determined to see the matter out and stuck to the trap, whose driver practically gave his case away by putting his horse into a gallop. His pursuer, being well mounted, gave chase and a hot race ensued along the moonlit road to Duns, the rider steadily gaining ground. At a point, however, where a thick wood skirted

the road, the trap suddenly pulled up, two men jumped out, and giving the horse a parting cut with the whip, dashed into the wood. The farmer soon overtook the horse and, getting hold of the bridle, succeeded in stopping it. The figure left in the gig proved, as he supposed, to be a corpse fixed in an upright position. He led the trap on to Duns and handed it over to the police. The body proved to be that of an old man buried at Edrom two days previously. The horse, it is needless to say, was never claimed, and the trap was burned in the market place by the indignant townspeople.

The other story had a grimly humorous side to it, and tells how an ingenious soul acquired a horse and trap gratis from a couple of Resurrectionists. In this case the genius in question, while walking on the road one night, noticed a trap just ahead of him pull up at a roadside inn, and two men get out of it and enter the house, leaving a third on the back seat. The observer, his suspicions aroused by something in the appearance of the latter, hastened up and found them verified, the figure on inspection proving to be a corpse. Not being troubled with nerves, our friend bundled the body out, and laying it in the ditch took its place in the trap. The Resurrectionists, their courage fortified, emerged from the inn, jumped up in front, and drove off unsuspectingly with their backs against that of the supposed corpse. By degrees uncanny feelings crept over them. One swore the back passenger pressed warm against him. The other, outwardly scouting his companion's tremors, began to lose nerve under the horrible suggestion. The corpse's substitute in the meantime contrived such subtle movements as to increase the growing terrors of the guilty pair, and unstring their nerves without giving any too pronounced signs of life. When by their conversation he judged them to be sufficiently under the influence of fear, night and superstition, he heaved a deep groan, and gave a push with his back about which there could be no possible misconception. Uttering a wild cry of "Man, it's alive," the pair leaped out and fled into the night, while the "corpse"

drove the trap home for better uses, and naturally enough was never called upon to restore it.

Norham, that greatest fortress of the Eastern March and of the old Prince Bishops of Durham, lifted its ruinous towers high upon the Northumbrian bank of Tweed. I never got across the river till much later years, nor yet to Flodden, though its fir-crowned ridge was visible from any high ground in Berwickshire. And what a battlefield that is as one stands on the Branxton ridge where the Scottish army was drawn up, with "Sullen Till" winding below along the line of Surrey's concentrating forces. Never surely did a hundred thousand men join in hideous slaughter on so small a space. Of the smaller Pele towers and fortalices that stud the country, none are more perfect or more imposingly placed than Smailholm. It is not, I fancy, included in the "Scott country" of the guide books, yet to me it has always seemed the very incarnation of Sir Walter's spirit and genius, as it was, in fact, the first fount of his inspiration.

For it was here, as he says himself, that he first dreamed those dreams which he was to weave later on into prose and verse that was to be the delight of his generation and of those to come, and the glory of his country. As a delicate child in a large family, cramped up in the old town at Edinburgh, he used to be sent out here to the farm of Sandy Knowe for lengthy periods. Here his grandmother and aunt, much given to such things, used to delight the merry, precocious child with all the lore and legends of the countryside, while lifted up on a rocky knoll against the skyline above the homestead stood and still stands, intact from roof to floor, the grim and lofty tower. Here on the turf beneath it, being weak in the legs, the boy used to lie for hours looking southward, as you may look to-day, over the vales of Tweed and Teviot to the Cheviot mountains, while westward a sea of dim hills covered all the visible portions of the shires of Peebles, Roxburgh and Selkirk, a spot "mete nurse for a poetic child" indeed. On a wild, windy day, too, as viewed from the windows of the farm-

house, standing out against a wild sky, what a background that stern tower must have made for the tales of olden days with which these reminiscent ladies used to fascinate the imaginative boy, while the old men about the place had their own stories and legends to impart.

“ And still I thought that shattered tower
The mightiest work in human power,
And marvelled as the aged hind
With some strange tale bewitched my mind,
Of forayers who with headlong force
Down from that strength had spurred their horse,
Their southern rapine to renew
Far in the distant Cheviots blue.

• • • • •
“ And ever by the winter hearth
Old tales I heard of woe and mirth,
Of lovers’ sleights, of ladies’ charms,
Of witches’ spells, of warriors’ arms,
Of Patriot battles won of old
By Wallace wight and Bruce the bold.”

CHAPTER X

NORTHERN GRAZIERS AND SOUTHERN FARMERS

THREE were great things doing in Aberdeenshire at this time with cattle. In that fine county, part Lowland and part Highland, the polled Angus breed, recently developed and standardized, was being much talked of, was taking first prizes at the December Fat Shows in London and Birmingham, while a meat train was running regularly from Aberdeen to London with their beef, which by its quality topped the market. Even the long-horned Highland cattle, though still represented in poor mountain districts by the original little "runts," had been developed on the rich pastures and succulent Aberdeen yellow turnips into great beasts that ranked with the best. And yet these ragged little horned cattle of former days had played an important part among the factors that transformed Scotland in the eighteenth century. It was only after the '45 that the Highlands were really open for trade. Till then raiding rather than trading had been the game. Wolfe, who, after Culloden, as a young colonel was policing the Argyllshire borders, reports, as I have read in his own handwriting, that £37,000 a year had been regularly paid in blackmail by the Lowland lairds and farmers. But after the settlement, Highland cattle came pouring down to the English markets, grazing and quartering on the Lowland farms, by the way, to the latter's great advantage and improved fertility.

I was curious to see this polled Angus country, and embraced an opportunity of spending several winter weeks

at the feet of the great McCombie of Tillyfour, the founder in a sense of the perfected breed. He was also M.P. for East Aberdeenshire, the only Scottish tenant farmer then in the House. A great character in himself, the "Grand Old Man" of the country and a well-known figure in the House of Commons, with his silver locks and long white beard, down which constant snuff-taking left its perennial trail. At home he was very hospitable, and took his glass on level terms with his neighbours, compared to whom the men of Lothians and the Merse were almost temperate. But they seldom, and he never, showed any effects from it, and as a hale old man of seventy would have been a tough nut for a temperance orator to crack. His brother, a stiff and dignified minister of the kirk with a parish near by, owned Tillyfour, so it was sometimes put to him that he was hardly justified in proclaiming himself so loudly as the champion of the tenant farmers in Parliament. He had, however, a well-known and pithy retort, that it was "better to be at the head o' the tenant farmers than at the feet o' the lairds." In truth the McCombies, a small West Highland clan I believe originally, were not of the Aberdonian purple.

It is hardly necessary to add that East Aberdeenshire was not a Highland country, nor its tenantry Highlanders with a few exceptions. Indeed, I learned there for the first time to my surprise, that these big graziers' forebears would have regarded it as an insult to have been credited with the blood of those bare-legged and pestilent cattle-thieves to the westward. So much has time and romance obscured the past and its naked and prosaic truth. Tillyfour was near Alford on Don-side, a cold, cheerless country in winter, when its fine pastures were withered or under snow, though the big mountains of the Braemar district to the far west as a background glorified it not a little. I had one or two former acquaintances up there who had taken farms and gone into black cattle, rather rashly fancying their judgment, and pitting themselves against the keenest traders upon earth. We all know the story of the Jewish family

who were met returning prematurely and in despair from a lodgment they had made in Aberdeen, declaring that they had stumbled upon the lost tribe. From what I saw of the country people, otherwise the big farmers, they were not much behind their townsfolk.

For the cattle were, of course, all in the yards at that season, fat show beasts, stots, queys, stirks and all the other grades thus designated in Aberdonian phraseology. In those short winter days I rode around with one or other of my before-mentioned adventurous friends visiting various notables in the cattle line, occasionally dining or supping with them, or sometimes driving round with the old man himself in his brougham on similar errands. For if these visitations were not always professedly business ones they invariably settled down, after the cattle had been looked over and the whisky had appeared, into an encounter of wits, of deals or attempted deals. I have never seen a people so absorbed in one single subject. They were quite different from the Lothian farmers I knew. There was nothing cheery or humorous about them. They were hardly even farmers in a strict sense, as the cultivation of the oats and turnips seemed to be left entirely to the grieves. Bullocks and dollars were their life. They neither rode, nor shot, nor fished, though they played loo for high stakes. However, they were quite a curious study from an outsider's point of view. But they were the only type of Scotsmen I never wanted to meet again! No doubt they have changed since then, and when all is said they were most successful, and supplied the country with magnificent beef, and spread the polled Angus breed all over the two Americas and the Colonies. I presume too that when the bad times came they suffered nothing like so much as their agricultural contemporaries. Queen Victoria had recently driven over from Balmoral to Tillyfour, when McCombie had his entire stock paraded in front of the house for her inspection, and it was a proud day.

This Aberdeenshire visitation had been but an interlude in my East Lothian time. I left Scotland for the South

again in the autumn of '72, and went into residence with the agent of a well-known estate on the borders of Wilts and Berks. It had the advantage of being fairly near my own people, and in the county of my up-bringing. Philip, too, had preceded me there from Lincolnshire with a view to sampling another farming country before he finally settled down. This was most welcome, as his companionship had always been stimulating and informing. We were very comfortably quartered in the agent's house in the Park. But as regards any insight into the estate management indoors or out, for which the old gentleman professed to give facilities, the less said the better. I suppose he kept the books and collected the rents, and there was an office of sorts in the house. But I rarely heard him even allude to such affairs, much less confide them to us.

He was, in short, a Calvinist of the old and irrepressible type, quite uncultured and inexpressibly boring. He was really out to save "brands from the burning," and not to impart estate management or agriculture to his pupils. He, no doubt, included us as potential converts to his dismal creed. He had long quarrelled with his local parson on the Eastward position, and drove his family and any others he could collect many miles on Sunday to sit under a gentleman who didn't turn about in the creeds. Self-righteous to a degree, he made long prayers and sang the more absurd of our hymns, such as appeal to his type, with great unction, and no certainty, if I remember rightly, as to notes or even H's! The late Lord, his employer, had been of evangelical leanings: hence the connection. I don't think our old gentleman was intentionally a hypocrite or remembered that he was really taking money under false pretences. For he seemed to wallow in his own blatant piety. A big white-haired man of a modified "Alley Sloper" type, with full red cheeks and thick lips, which could do the ecstatic evangelical smile of that day when a brand was in process of being snatched, to perfection. His wife and daughter, though apparently willing participants in his regime, were a great improvement on their lord

He held the agency in another county of a rather noted magnate of strong evangelical views. So our friend's staunch profession of them had paid him well, as very often happened in those days. However, his philandering in Old Testament theology, and with obvious compassion for the darkness in which Philip and I with most of the world were wandering, and his apparent detachment from the things we were there to interest ourselves in, didn't worry us much. Moreover, he kept a good table, as those people generally did, though he thought smoking sinful.

As a matter of fact, there was a thousand-acre home farm nominally managed by the old gentleman, but actually by a Scotch steward, with whom we naturally foregathered, and saw into all we wished of farming heavy land under the local system of the day. We had many long and interesting walks about it and neighbouring farms. The contrast with the Scottish methods was considerable, and the Scotch steward, wisely, no doubt, laid no violent hands on the local customs. Judging from the adjoining farms this one would have let at about 30s. an acre, not 70s. which a similar quality of land in the Lothians would have been brought up to fetch. There has always seemed to me much logic in the Scotsmen's verdict that English land was underlet to its detriment, though I leave it with the Scotsmen at that. The grain crops were not Dutch-hoed and clean as in the North, and the amount of manure hauled far less. There was no subsoil tile drainage, the more primitive practice of loose stone drains was in vogue. It was strange, too, to find wheel ploughs often (as constantly still) dragged by four horses with a second man or boy leading them, cutting a furrow of about six inches deep as opposed to swing ploughs of the North, handled by one man, with a brisk-stepping pair of Clydesdales and cutting an eight- or nine-inch furrow. Turnip singling and hoeing here, as I think all through the South, was then done by piecework, isolated men or women scattered singly or in pairs over the root fields. In the North a gang of women working by the day, with a grieve behind them, as we have seen, did all this.

The swedes in East Lothian used to look as if they were fairly jostling one another out of the rows, and for the information of those to whom this means anything, sometimes produced as much as thirty tons to the acre.

But this big farm in the Vale of the White Horse, for that straggling prehistoric monster was visible on the distant downs, was regarded as being quite well done. I am merely recalling the great contrast between its comparatively untidy surface and straggling fences, and gaping ditches and slow-going methods, with the clean, brisk look of the Scottish farms and their occupants. Yet I have little doubt that the profit was as great, if not greater. Wages were very low, 11s. with harvest money was about the average rate. The men struck on this and I think the adjoining farms during this harvest of 1872 ; but the matter was quickly settled, though in what fashion I forget. But this was really the beginning of the movement that broke out a year or two later under the famous Joseph Arch. I well remember that our sanctimonious friend was enraged at the time with his men. Everyone then had been brought up to think that a labourer had no concern at all with the profits of farming, and was entitled to just a bare living, and such charity as was dealt out to him by kindness or convention.

Joseph Arch, a labourer himself, was a simple-minded, honest man. He had no subversive or revolutionary theories, nor did he ever counsel forcible methods. He only considered that with the abounding prosperity of the country his class was entitled to a small share of it, and he was eventually successful in a limited way. Philip was characteristically beginning to feel this, and, as I mentioned in an earlier chapter, showed the courage of his opinions on a later occasion. Though machines had been introduced some years they cut the whole of the harvest on this large farm by hand with sickles and fagging hooks! And I do not think the crop had been laid, for it was a very fine season.

During my long absence in Scotland I had of necessity

put cricket out of mind—I had never even seen a game. I came South, however, just in time to play for a Wiltshire Gentlemen's team, captained by my old friend, the wicket-keeper of Holne memory, against the school at Marlborough in the last match of the season, which then carried on till the end of September, and made 61 (not out), which was creditable under the circumstances. It was the last game of cricket I was to play in England for many a long year. For I was already meditating future adventures, not yet communicated, for the opposition I thought they would naturally encounter. I was very stiff the next morning. Our Scottish existence, though strenuous enough, had included no athletic activities. And when there were no boundaries even 120 or so runs involved a great deal of sprinting, to say nothing of the time spent running about in the field or bowling. So I decided to walk it off by returning on foot to the home of the Prophet—about twenty miles. A pleasant walk, too, was this, some ten miles of it across that chalk upland with its fir-tufted hills marked on maps as the Marlborough Downs, familiar to me from childhood, and then for another ten through the greenwooded and less familiar country of the White Horse Vale; The great sheep farmers of the downs, with their large unfenced tillage fields swelling in the wide troughs between the ranges, were in their glory then, with plenty of money and well-stocked cellars: the Tanners, the Gales, the Strattons, the Lynes and other notable stock. It was still the Wiltshire, the Barsetshire of Anthony Trollope, and those great days of dignity, peace and abundance. The Grantleys and the Greshams, the Robartes and the Luptons were still all about, snug and secure in their gracious homes. It is no use Mr. Sadleir trying to throw a doubt on Salisbury as the Barchester of Trollope, and suggesting that it might be Winchester, though it is the only possible alternative. But let any lover of Trollope, and his Barchester, try to imagine its snug little society with a great Public School and a biggish garrison in its midst! Besides Trollope visited a good deal in the Close at Salisbury. Yet more,



MARLBOROUGH COLLEGE, OLD SEYMOUR MANSION

in two of his books, the *Vicar of Bullhampton* and another which for the moment has escaped me, the author drops anonymity and makes Salisbury and Wiltshire definitely the scene of them. When one considers the books now written of country life, and generally for obvious reasons laid in home counties, where the old social values have long been crowded out, and notes the howlers which urban or suburban writers perpetrate, one appreciates the more the sure and easy grip of all these things that Trollope had. He never blunders in country details.

I came out of the downs above the Swindon country that fine September afternoon over Liddington hill-top, where Richard Jefferies, from his father's farm of Coate down below, was just beginning to dream his dreams, though, of course, we knew nothing about them at that time; when his rustic friends used to call him Mad Dick Jefferies. His Rector's son, however, who was incidentally a school-fellow of mine and, more to the purpose here, is my near neighbour at the present day, tells me that as a boy rather younger than Jefferies, he was his frequent companion on his country rambles, and has the pleasantest memories of the genius, who his biographers generally write of as a morbid and unsociable lad.

Indoor life with the Prophet, though materially comfortable, as may be imagined, was not stimulating, and sometimes irritating. An unwonted excitement, however, marked my not very prolonged stay there. For a Chippewag Chief from the shores of Lake Huron, in charge of a missionary, descended upon us. As the missionary had been diverted some years before from a potential farmer to his present profession by the Prophet himself, he was accounted as one of the successes of his brand-snatching efforts, so, of course, he and his protégé straight from the wild woods and "the shining big sea water," were received with open arms, and spent several days in the house. But I have told the story elsewhere of how Hiawatha, in his white Hudson's Bay blanket and moccasins, astonished the villagers. How he evinced a partiality, but not too marked

a one, for sherry at meals, and how the Prophet beamed on him, as speech was impossible since he had no English, save when he lit his long pipe and showed that he had not yet wholly found grace. And I have elsewhere told how before the assembled hundreds in the Park, he sang the war song and danced the war dance in full war paint and feathers, wildly brandishing his tomahawk. Such a thing had never been seen in Wiltshire before, and probably never has since. Old women shrieked, young mothers clasped their children to their breast. But a good collection was taken up afterwards, some of the coppers perhaps by way of a thankoffering for an escape from being tomahawked and scalped.

We had, by the way, another inmate who was supposed to be studying the science of agriculture under the Prophet. He was a good deal older than us, and hardly congenial, rather a Simple Simon, in fact. He was of stoutish habit and rosy face, though with an odd touch of quite incongruous pomposity, probably inherited from his father, a late Master of Balliol, who was famous for his pompous mien. It sat rather oddly on his quite unscholarly offspring, and always brought to my mind a story my father used to tell of how the dignity of the old Master was on one terrible occasion dragged in the very dust.

It was a young and rather nervous Oxford hostess who wrought this thing. She was giving a dinner-party, to which the Master of Balliol had been bidden, as the most important guest. The manservant, to whom fell the announcing of the guests, was a raw and unsophisticated person, and his mistress sorely dreaded his rendering of the complicated titles of the Oxford notabilities. "Now, mind," she said, "you must be sure and say 'The Master of Balliol and Mrs. Jenkins.'" Perhaps characteristically that great man was the last to arrive, and as the drawing-room door flew open, the over-drilled rustic announced to the assembled company in clarion tones, "Master Baily and Miss Jenkins." The son, however, took his farming seriously if silently. He not only carried a "spud," the

country gentleman's immemorial emblem, among his sticks and umbrellas on railway journeys, but I encountered him once at Reading Station with a long hay fork among his impedimenta, its formidable and shining prongs on a moving truck scattering dismay along the crowded platform.

Towards winter I had an offer from the agent of a large property on the western borders of the New Forest, who was more or less a family acquaintance. His principal was a nobleman who had just purchased an estate, adjoining his own ancestral acres. It had been neglected by the late owners, who were so rich that they could afford to neglect it for the better harbourage of game. That sort of thing could be done in those days. There were a great many tenants on it, mostly smallish ones, who had hitherto done as they liked. They were now going to be routed up, and a brief report of their farms, with the cropping of the last few years, was wanted for his lordship's information. This job was now committed to me. The estate straggled up and around the Avon valley behind Ringwood, where I settled in rooms. The agent himself lived at a distance from the property, and had his office at his own home. Here there was a certain amount of detail work to be done in conjunction with the clerk, a youngish man who was in a galloping consumption, poor fellow, though he did not seem to realize it. But he knew all the tenants on both estates and their characteristics, upon which he could be quite entertaining. While his employer, on the other hand, was rather a dour, silent bachelor with, I fancy, a liver contracted in the East—a good business man, I think, but of slight actual acquaintance with farming or English country life. I could not imagine him hunting up the wild men and women in their sequestered weedy and wooded lairs among whom he sent me.

Seriously, though, these people were, in part at least, a very queer lot indeed. I was out among them on horseback several days a week, and some of their little holdings buried away in the skirts of the Forest were quite hard to come at. Nearly always I approached in the guise, as they sup-

posed, of an enemy. They had heard of a new broom and a clean sweep and so on. It was none too pleasant work trying to get the recent cropping of their fields out of these suspicious souls, as many of them thought, though wrongly, that a sentence of eviction was hanging over them, while the moment they acquired some confidence they were much more eloquent on the obvious building dilapidations than on their own not so obvious mistreatment of the soil. There was one virago, I remember, who held about forty acres. The estate clerk foretold that I should not get inside her gate. He had once tried himself, and she had gone for him with a pitchfork. She proved extraordinarily unpleasant, but she was fortunately unarmed when I effected an entrance. Some of the larger farmers, however, were quite pleasant and even hospitable. They were interested in hearing about the Scottish system, though I doubt if they believed the figures, the rents, yields and so forth, and I had probably not sufficient years to impress them as an authority.

On off days I explored the New Forest on foot. I confess that it did not greatly stir me. The Scottish Borderland was too fresh in mind. The flattish, open tracts of dry heather with no stir or sound of streams didn't do at all after the Lammermuir harmonies, while the surviving portions of the old forest did not seem to me then, nor do they now, equal to the glorious forest of Savernake. That perfect example, with its fifteen or so square miles, of an ancient chase, penetrated with those magnificent beech avenues ; those stately Gothic aisles that Monsieur Lesseps once declared had no equal in Europe. The New Forest, since those days, seems to have gathered round its fringes a considerable residential element, who, I believe, are known to one another as "foresters," a condition which always tends towards exaggerated eulogy of the locality so annexed, and perhaps just a little pose !

On a far different scale the county of Sussex has been afflicted in the same way for years. Being a pretty and pleasant county in a gentle way between London and a

sea coast studded with large watering places, it is the stamping ground of thousands of brief holiday makers, and the residence of thousands more of educated folk unconnected with it by birth, business or fortune. In short, it fills the immediate eye of a very large public indeed, and so a quite abnormal space in descriptive journalism and fiction, and with an excess of eulogy, that to anyone who knows England well, sounds just a trifle foolish. But, then, very few people do know their England well, hence this disproportionate exuberance. The Brighton downs, for example, are the only downs. The much wider, and wilder and even loftier tracts of downland of which Wiltshire is the heart and centre, hardly exists for London journalists who deal with Arcadian scenes. The rustic of the lady novelist again, when not of Cornwall, for which the fast train service is, I suppose, responsible, is nearly always the rustic of Sussex or Kent, who is in actual fact comparatively sophisticated, and more than inclined to a cockney accent. Nor do they often go further afield for their "squire," who, though not quite extinct, has long been virtually submerged in a wholly artificial state of rural society quite different from that of normal counties such as Wilts and Dorset, or still more from such as Shropshire or Herefordshire.

There are even societies of Sussex residents, who apparently believe the universal smock of a former day to have been peculiar to that county, and tramp the downs, so I am told, on holidays in companies decorated with ornate replicas of the extinct article, and "quaff ale" at country inns out of blue mugs, almost asking for the notice they get at the hands of *Punch* and other humorists. To anyone who knows their England well, as I have said, these limitations of outlook do sound a bit absurd. When I was quite young, England and Wales taken together seemed to me to fall naturally into two distinct sections, which though differing much internally, differed far more from one another. And when I got to know my own country more intimately I saw it yet more clearly in the same fashion, and thus I see it still. If I say that these divisions

consist of the one that the water ouzel haunts and the other which it avoids, it will, I doubt, sound fantastic to most readers. But some who are familiar with that little bird and its tastes will understand exactly what I mean, and recognize that the definition is absolutely sound. My line, of course a roughly defined one, runs just east of the Dorset-Devon and Devon-Somerset boundary. Thence beyond the Bristol Channel it zigzags up through Hereford and Shropshire to the Welsh and Cheshire borderline. Then with a gap it roughly divides Lancashire, and enclosing most of Yorkshire and the Peak district of Derbyshire, cuts across to the Yorkshire coast.

Now to the north and west of this roughly drawn line are a dozen counties, together with the whole of Wales, where everywhere the hills achieve a dignity of altitude and contour, and the waters are clear and rapid, with all the kindred features common to such physical conditions. South and east of this line, on the other hand, are thirty or more counties where the hills are comparatively low and smooth, the rivers sluggish, and the brooks almost unnoticeable in the landscape. It has always seemed to me that these are two wholly distinct regions, and if comparisons of scenery are to be made, such comparisons can only be sanely made within their respective limits and not across them. Kent or Sussex, for instance, should confine its claims to scenic pre-eminence to its own division, which though, of course, a varied one, has everywhere the same limitations, and is on the same scale. It is absurd to compare these two counties with Hereford or Devon, whose hills touch the mountain elevation and often the mountain contour, with all thereby implied, and whose pellucid rivers like the Wye or Dart tumble over clean, rocky beds, and whose brooks sparkle vividly in every valley. In short, these western and northern counties do not lend themselves to comparison with any of the other group. One looks for their like in their own, despite its great varieties, in South Wales more closely, in Yorkshire or Northumberland less closely, but yet all of the same

genus. For one must account North Wales and the English lake country for their noble mountains as *sui generis* as outstanding regions to themselves. So it seems mere common logic that the panegyrists of, let us say, Warwickshire, who are fairly vocal, or Hampshire, or Norfolk or Sussex should fight the matter out among themselves, and in their own group, when they claim that their county is "the most beautiful in England," and not trespass into a region with which Nature has not equipped them to compare. Otherwise they are talking sheer nonsense.

It may be said, however, that the ancients of the earlier eighteenth century did not like high or bold hills, but sang of and loved a soft, ornate country, the "teeming plain," "the vocal" grove and so on. There are people almost like that now, and why not? Everyone to his taste. There are conceivably still persons to whom rapid waters and lofty heights make no appeal, or probably yet more to whom these things are really unfamiliar, and so their absence in scenery is not felt. Hence very likely the exaggerated note and lack of proportion in their transports over the more homely scenes, as if there were no other England, and this was the last word! Fortunately in this astonishing little country, its uplifted regions lose nothing in colour or luxuriance to the low-lying ones. On the contrary, owing partly to a moister climate and partly to abounding streams, the grass is actually greener, the gorse and broom more radiant, the woods as rich, the hedgerows as lush as in the many lower-pitched counties, which depend for their charm mainly upon such things.

My way in these days led me much up and down the Avon, and the Avon is one of those chalk streams which help to brighten the meadowy troughs of the vast downland of Wilts, Hants, West Berks and Dorset. The cold translucency of the water coming up from their deep-down springs lifts the chalk stream, though only occasionally lively, out of the class of sluggish rivers. The Southdowns send out no chalk streams, the rivers of Sussex rise in the clay districts in the back of the county, and cut through

the chalk ridge on their slow way to the sea. The Hampshire Avon, so called, draws almost every gallon of its water from Wiltshire. Born in the Pewsey Vale, and reinforced near Salisbury by the Wylye, it leaves the cathedral town a fair-sized river, and rolls its slow but clear waters steadily down from mill to mill, where great heaving pools make picturesque breaks in its journey. Nor must one forget that it is one of the very few salmon rivers in the "Thirty Counties."

My reunion with Philip at the Prophet's was hardly accidental. But my rather fortuitous engagement at Ringwood occasioned a really strange but acceptable rencontre. For I found myself on the very next estate to the one managed by Larry and his father, and what was more, they had both at that moment come over from Ireland on business and were stopping for two or three weeks at their usual quarters on the property. Still more strange, part of their particular business was a boundary dispute between their estate and ours! I had hardly expected to see Larry again when we parted in Scotland a year or so back. And here we were down at the other extremity of the kingdom, in the service of two adjoining Nabobs, at odds, for the moment, with one another.

But the dispute did not concern me, and I spent more than one delightful week-end at the cosy village inn which always harboured them. I made my first acquaintance, too, with Larry's father, a fine specimen of an old Irish gentleman, but whose active days were obviously and rather prematurely over. Their estate lay largely on the chalk, part in Wilts and part in Dorset. Some of the large tenants holding a thousand acres or more were on terms of old intimacy, and a pleasant interchange of hospitalities went forward. All went well in those great times. Audit day with its convivial feast at the inn brought few anxieties and little friction. The big farmers were only too glad for Larry to ride their young horses with Lord Radnor's hounds, and, young as he was, get his opinion of them, and it was a pleasure I had not before had to see him on a horse. The



HIGH STREET, MARLBOROUGH

great "land-slide" was still a decade away. But when it came, few regions, probably, but East Anglia were hit harder than this Wessex country. A great deal of its grazing land, covered with the beautiful down sward of centuries, was ploughed up when grain was high, particularly at the Crimean War period and in the 'seventies, and farmers had not yet begun to regret it. Three quarters to the acre showed profit when wheat was at 70s. or even 60s., but where was all this thin land when wheat had dropped to 25s., or where for that matter the best of land—with the fine sheep sward gone under and hardly restorable in twice twenty years?

In the meantime I had been cherishing intentions which meant an entire change in my scheme of life. I don't think it was the two types of land agent I had so far encountered that had given me a less exalted opinion of the profession and its prospects. For the connection between Canada and Fentonbarns had interested me a good deal in that country. Then there was the old, old story of the desire to own one's own land, stimulated, not as it so often is, by a mere impatience of town life, as I had never suffered from it, nor ever had the slightest intention of doing so, but by the very real attraction land and all that concerned it somehow had for me. Even more perhaps was the adventure and romance of the thing, for Canada was then not much known or sought after, and I was very susceptible to such influences. Moreover, I did not propose to content myself with the old settled parts of the Dominion, as we now call it. People had just begun to talk about the Red River country, afterwards Manitoba. A year previously Lord Wolseley had led an expedition up there to quell a rebellion of the French-Indian half-breeds, who were the chief occupants of the "Great Lone Land," as Butler's well-known book called it. It was now just open for settlement, though still a fortnight's journey through lakes and forests from Montreal or Toronto. It was spoken of as a country of the future, though when that future might be no one knew. At any rate it fired my fancy. Of course, like all my

countrymen, much more then even than now, I was pretty vague on North American topography. I remember writing out to an old schoolfellow, who was a barrister in the Toronto district, and asking him if he could tell me anything about the North-West—the Red River country. He was highly amused, and replied that he knew no more about it than I did. It was wholly outside their purview in Canada. A few years later, curiously enough, he became one of the most active pioneer settlers and developers of Manitoba, and when he died, before the war, had been Senator for that province at Ottawa for ten or fifteen years. Such is life and its surprises.

I went over to spend Christmas and New Year with my people in the Isle of Wight, at Freshwater, where my father had a house and some land which had been our holiday home all my life. I expected to meet with much remonstrance if not opposition to my scheme. I am afraid I was credited with more wisdom than I possessed, or than most young men in their early twenties possess, and my plans were not opposed. Freshwater—a large parish, not a village—was then a quiet place, untouched by railroads and only accessible by a small steamer from Lymington. But it was already the home of some and the haunt of other people well known in their day, and more or less familiar with one another. The circle has been recalled in many memoirs and the like, and particularly by visitors to Tennyson, some of whom have drawn highly fantastic pictures of their experience. I do not wish to drop into the "celebrities I have met" style in these pages. But besides the Tennysons there were other interesting people then living in the parish. Old Admiral Sir Graham Hammond for one, who had been a post-captain under Nelson and known him well personally, was a leading resident, and had only recently died at a great age. The Ward family of Roman Catholic and literary celebrity were residents and considerable land-owners. The father of Lord Bowen, too, together with Dr. Pritchard, the Oxford astronomer and professor, had houses there. The once famous Mrs. Cameron was, of

course, a Freshwater resident, with all her sons and Prinsep relatives about her, the only one of Tennyson's friends, it has been said, who ventured to chaff him. She not only photographed everybody who was deemed worthy of it, but had a theatre in her garden and much acting among the young people. Of the more or less habitual visitors in this circle, I recall the Auberon Herberts, two Miss Thackerays still in deep black for their father, Dr. Butler, then not long appointed to Harrow, Mr. Frederick Locker as he then was and his young daughter, who married Lionel Tennyson, and as a widow, Mr. Birrell. The great Jowett, too, from Balliol was down that winter. A cousin of ours who was in command of the forts in the parish at the time had a subaltern who sang comic songs that delighted even the *savants*, and none more than the Laureate himself—who on his own account, with his deep gruff voice, liked to swell the chorus round the family piano when popular songs were going forward.

That New Year, however, was illumined for me by my appearance in print for the first time, and everybody who has ever wielded a pen knows what that means to the very young. In my many solitary evenings at Ringwood I had written an account of our visits to the Whiteadder, and in the form of two articles, had sent them with small hopes of ever seeing them again, to the *Field*. That famous paper dealt more in longish articles in those leisurely days. It was altogether devoted to field sports, farming and cricket, but had quite a literary flavour, and held a paramount position in the outdoor world, as it does still in more modern guise. Mr. Francis Francis, the then quite famous fishing editor and author, not only printed both my articles, but put a footnote expressing a hope that he should hear from me again, which electrified me beyond measure. And he did hear from me again very often, though not yet awhile. For I wrote articles at intervals on various outdoor subjects for the paper for the next forty years under the signature of "Ringwood," the place from which I had despatched that first venture. As I was not sailing till the spring,

when the report on the much neglected estate was completed, I went North for a farewell visit to my Scottish friends, including Aberdeenshire.

But at this time a bombshell had fallen on Fentonbarns and stirred up the whole agricultural world, and even that of politics not a little. Mr. Hope had received notice from Mr. Nisbet Hamilton that his lease, shortly expiring, would not be renewed. Of course, no reason was given. It was impossible to tell a distinguished agriculturist, who had made his farm an object of pilgrimage, that he was to be evicted because some years before he had stood for Parliament in the Liberal interest. This, I grant, will seem almost incredible to the reader of to-day. But it is the simple truth, and indeed there was no attempt to disguise it. No secret was made of it. There had been no shade of a personal quarrel or disagreement. Poor Mr. Nisbet Hamilton. Before he had finished with it, he must have come almost to wish that he had never been born ! An ex-Cabinet Minister too ! There was a tremendous row. The London papers, a rare thing in those days, sent down Special Correspondents. The Liberal Press stormed, the Conservatives cried privately and sometimes outwardly to be saved from their friends.

Mr. Hope himself never said a word, or attempted to pose as a victim. He was that sort of man. Nor was the financial side of great consequence, as he was comfortably off. But that wasn't the point. The family had held the farm for a hundred years and made it famous, to say nothing of the money spent on it, and there was a son well qualified to carry it on. The break, of course, was a bitter blow, while the action was absolutely senseless, and much worse than senseless as regards the landlord's own party. Yet more, Mr. Hope was not even contemplating another attempt at Parliament. The previous affair of Sadler of Ferrygate, already alluded to, had taught its owner nothing. But that had been a trifle compared to this, as the tenant in question had acquired no outside distinction till he was turned out ! Indignant agriculturists from France, Germany and Scandinavia wrote to the Press, asking who and what

was this Mr. Hamilton ! Mr. Hope, they declared, was of European fame, but who was the offender ?—they had never heard of him. This was unkind, as he was one of the wealthiest landowners in Scotland. Mr. Nisbet Hamilton had the reputation of being otherwise a just and fair man. But of his political arrogance there was no doubt whatever. The tenant who followed at a quite fairly increased rent was, I believe, unsuccessful—but his successor held Fenton-barns for a very long term, and died there as an old man after weathering all the lean years, with a high reputation.

Mr. Hope retired to a large farm he had purchased in Peeblesshire, and died in the early 'eighties, living just long enough to see his absolute confidence in the enduring value of British land badly shaken. In the mid-'seventies, when his son on his marriage secured amid much competition the lease of Oxwell Mains, on the Dunbar red land, at £5 an acre, his father declared it to be one of the happiest moments of his life. I mention this as significant of the times. On a visit home in 1877 I was spending a few days myself at Oxwell Mains. The storm signals of Western competition were already hoisted in the seaboard States of America Prices at home, however, were still good. Hope was threshing his '76 wheat crop, which was showing the extraordinary yield of eight quarters to the acre. The London eating houses would have no potatoes but the "Dunbar Regents" and were ready to pay for them.

It was a pleasant as well as productive place. Though the Northern express trains thundered by within fifty yards of the door, the clean red fields before the house gave on to the clean sward and sandy dunes of the links, and the blue waters of the Firth broke on yellow sands and rocky ledges. The Lammermuirs, too, had drawn here much nearer to the coast on their journey towards the Pease Pass and St. Abbs Head and rose high in the background above their woody foot-hills. Dunbar Law seemed near at hand, where the Scottish army abandoned their secure position on that fatal day, and at the bidding of fanatical preachers, while a few hundred yards away was Broxbourne House,

in whose garden Cromwell watched the movement, and closed his spy glass with that laconic utterance, "The Lord hath delivered them into our hands."

I have said that the storm signals of prairie competition were already up across the Atlantic, and I have no doubt I remarked to my host in the easy way of old acquaintance, " You don't expect this sort of thing (the high prices and prosperity) to last, do you ? " I know that the negative seemed to me pretty obvious. He says that I did, and though he put it aside at the moment as idle talk, it stuck somehow in his mind and came back to him often enough in the years to come, when the breaking, not the seeking, of leases was the order of the day.

CHAPTER XI

AN IRISH SQUIRE

HITHERTO this simple record has been chronological. I must now make a slight diversion to follow Larry back to his Irish home, where in the course of twenty years I paid him many visits. And these did not begin, for sufficient reasons, till three or four years after we parted in Wiltshire in 1872-73. Apart from the pleasure of his company and the pursuits and diversions which it entailed, the life he led, and the district he lived in were both as good a sample of average Southern Irish life as could have been found. Larry owned about eight hundred acres of land, mostly grass, which he farmed himself in preference to letting it, and more profitably. Irishmen of his class could do this somehow, English squires admittedly never—at a profit. So many of the former had an eye for stock, not merely for horses but for cattle, which counted for so much in Irish farming. Moreover, they were quite at home in a deal, which counts for as much more. They did not send their bailiff to buy and sell, nor need the advice of a veterinary surgeon. These, at any rate, were my impressions, gathered from a very typical Irish country-side and its occupants, of which I saw a great deal.

Larry was also for some years agent for the large adjoining estate of an absentee—of Cromwellian grant originally. For some other years he was on the Land Commission, and all the time from his father's death was an active magistrate, and notable for his strict impartiality. Beyond any doubt he was very popular with "the people," always with the reservation that a certain percentage of even those who

justly extolled him would in periods of political excitement have shot him without hesitation from behind a hedge, while the rest would have looked on, lamenting him personally, but regarding his assassin without the slightest repulsion. For thus are these people made. Poor Larry! fortunately for him, he died long before he would have seen his friends and neighbours, and generally the best of them and probably himself, burnt out, ruined, or murdered, and the Gombeen man, the Priest and the Usurer slide into their place. Unlike most of the neighbouring country houses, Larry's was really picturesque; not very large, but low and rambling, and thickly clad with ivy and creepers. It stood on the rim of a little valley down which a bright trout stream made cheerful music. Lawn and shrubberies sloped down towards the stream, and magnificent beech trees flanked the house on either side, and lined the drive running out to the high road. Behind were large walled gardens, and ample stables and farm buildings. But best of all, perhaps, was the spacious view from the front windows. For some eight miles distant the Slieve Bloom mountains, a long, narrow range which divides the King's from the Queen's County, filled the horizon. Towards them spread the rolling landscape of green pastures patched with tillage and white farmhouses and occasional woodland, characteristic of most of Leinster. Great stretches of brown bog, though not visible, ran here and there like lakes throughout this pleasant looking country, contributing to that touch of pathos which is such a recognized note in Irish scenery.

Just as most English people get all their ideas of Scotland from the Highlands, so in Ireland, and for much the same reasons, they generally derive their notions of the country from the poverty-stricken, thinly populated western counties to which tourists mainly resort. But this midland county was of a good average type, not at all as the western fringes scarcely fit even for the peasant and cottar population that a perversity of fate, or of those concerned, has retained upon it—that of the cabin, the potato patch and the pig. These people here were farmers of the "fifty-acre" type,

paying an average of 10s. an acre, not the 15s. to £1 that the same quality and type of land would have fetched in Devonshire or Wales, both fairly low-rented countries, as under the Irish land system the tenant did his own improvements. There were some "strong" farmers too, sometimes half-gentry, holding much more, and occasionally stretches of good feeding or "finishing" land worth £2 an acre. Along the mountain or bog edges there were, to be sure, a certain number of the cottar type. But the famine of '48 had cleared away most of these hopelessly uneconomic holdings, and their remains had long gone back to the heather and moor grass from which they should never have been wrested.¹ There was one great local landowner, the descendant of a Cromwellian grantee, an absentee through all the years I knew this country, for whom Larry acted as agent. A number of his tenants were descendants of the troopers his ancestor had settled around him, and had remained Protestants ever since, though politically at one with their Catholic neighbours. Otherwise they were distinguished for the comparative neatness of their homes, inside and out. The other gentry of the district were of small or moderate estate—stay-at-home people mostly, and all taken up with farming and hunting; not greatly with conventional gaieties, but finding a fund of amusement in one another's eccentricities! And there really were a remarkable number of persons qualified to afford entertainment of this kind in one form or another.

Farming in the 'seventies prospered here as elsewhere. There had been a long lull too in the chronic "throuble" since the famine, the tithe war and the Encumbered Estates Act. But the Home Rule agitation was just passing out of the hands of the moderates like Butt and getting into those of the wild men and Parnell, when I first began to

¹ Stewart Trench, the author of *The Realities of Irish Life*, a book which about this time caused a great sensation, was a big land-agent and large farmer in this district. In it he described the Famine, its causes and results, in all of which he took a leading part. Written by an able, practical man who knew at first hand every detail of those terrible years, it is worth all the academic and partisan records of the period that were ever written, and is withal a most thrilling story.

visit Larry. His father was then alive, and though almost confined to the house still enjoyed his dinner and glass of port. An old crony, who used often to come and dine with him, was in appearance and character one of the greatest oddities I have ever met. He was the Protestant incumbent of a neighbouring parish, and an old bachelor of private fortune. He was also a cadet of one of the great Irish Anglo-Norman houses. His seventy years may have decreased such stature as he had originally possessed, but I am sure he was then hardly more than five feet high. He had a large head much sunk between his shoulders, and a heavy face of fiery red, out of which two bright eyes fairly gleamed. "He'd pick the very eyes out of your head with a look," as Larry's housekeeper used to put it. Then came a pendant bottle nose, and a large mouth with amazingly thick lips supported by three chins, which gradually subsided into the folds of his white neckcloth. Hunched up at table the old man's head came very little above it, and as he lovingly caressed his wine glass with the edge of his thick lips he was an unforgettable spectacle. Yet with all this, he had immense dignity. He was an aristocrat and a Tory to his finger-tips. He possessed, too, a clear, bell-like, carefully modulated, rather high-pitched voice, and spoke with a hyper-fastidious scholarly enunciation, almost like some old-fashioned University don, though his utterances generally related to bygone sport or the like, or to the strongest condemnation of the Ireland of his old age. What he would have thought of his country to-day is beyond conception. Indeed, how little any three of my table companions of such moments dreamed of the scenes that would one day take place around them, and even in the very house we were sitting in.

My liking for old men's talk of their past was fully gratified when this venerable stalwart came to dine with us alone, which he did fairly often, as his old friend was no longer up to general company. Both the old men, particularly the parson, had seen a great deal of life in Ireland. Larry loved him, and would keep the old fellow going with his

stories told in his clear-cut superfine voice, drawing out the old ones for my benefit. Sometimes the narrative would check the circulation of the decanter when our host, marking the delinquent, would exclaim, "Come, sir, you're idling, you're idling." Not that there was any excess with these two old gentlemen, and in any case the port was much too good to cause any such anxieties as had belonged, for instance, to the toddy hour at Priestlaw. Larry had a great gift of mimicry, and could take off to the life any of his neighbours who lent themselves to it, and they were many. Despite his regard for his father's old friend he was quite at his best in rendering one or other of his stories in the unforgettable voice and accent. I myself contributed something to his memory. I had always a natural, though little cultivated gift for caricature, but only at long intervals lit on someone I could really hit off, and these few for some reason were as conspicuous successes as my other attempts were failures. The greatest success of my life was our old friend, whom I drew in profile as he sat hunched up at table. In truth he required no caricaturing, and Larry always declared it was a complete and perfect likeness. He had it framed, and after the old man's death hung it up over the dining-room chimney-piece, where it remained till his own death, when it was sent to me. But it was no use showing it to my friends, as they had never seen the original, and apart from the dress, it merely looked to them like some gargoyle from a church tower. But even the servants at Larry's used to declare it was "the very spit of his Reverence." It was delightfully in keeping, too, with everything else appertaining to the old man, that he was the sole representative left in office of the old State Church in Ireland that Gladstone had disestablished a few years earlier. For it seems that he had stoutly refused to conform and be transferred to the new disestablished Church. He was, therefore, ineligible for the stipend. But that didn't matter to the old hero, so he just sat tight, kept his parish, saved himself the humiliation of surrender to Gladstone's criminal Act, as

he considered it, and remained a solitary chip of the old Establishment, refusing to the last to engage any curate ordained under the new dispensation. He lived for some years after his old friend's death, but was devoted to Larry, who actually closed his eyes for him. I went myself more than once to his Rectory, where from old age and choice he led rather a solitary life. But once there his hospitalities were overwhelming, there was no getting away. They all three now lie beside one another under the shadow of the church that, in the person of its Rector, defied disestablishment for such a long term of years.

Twice in the 'seventies when on visits home from abroad, I had the good fortune to see something of Irish hunting with Larry. The County Hounds, with which he had been to the fore since boyhood, were a distinctly provincial pack, i.e. as opposed to those of Meath, Kildare and Kilkenny, or to put it otherwise, "unfashionable" according to the Irish standards of that day. No English sportsmen came over to hunt with them, nor were there any regiments within reach. The fields were small, twenty or thirty horsemen perhaps, and they were all local people who had mostly known one another all their lives. They were all out to ride, every one of them, so far as their respective mounts would admit of. There was none of that element found in most English hunting fields who were out for half a dozen reasons other than love of the sport, too familiar to need elaborating. Larry used to mount me, as a light weight, on a small mare, no longer young, but absolutely perfect in the "on and off" jumps of that bank and ditch country. I had nothing to do but to sit on her back, and I remember what a revelation it was the way she lightly touched the greasy, narrow ridge of this fence, or picked her feet off entangling beech or ash roots that covered the broader top of another for the jump over the further ditch. It was beautiful to see Larry ride. Even his hard-riding friends paid frank tribute to his super-excellence across country. He was anything but a rich man, and never, I think, had more than a couple, or at most three, hunters going. But

then he used to buy or breed young horses, make them himself, and send them over to Dorsetshire, where he had an agent in the Blackmore Vale country. I always remember an absurd scene at the end of a run in this country. It was towards the end of the 'seventies, after Parnell was beginning to make things unpleasant and a period of trouble setting in. After a short run towards the end of a spring day the fox went to ground in some sort of a hole in the potato patch of a cabin. On coming up with the rest, the Master and Whip were seen in the garden, with the hounds around, having a tremendous altercation with an old hag of a woman. She was bawling and gesticulating at the Master who had got hold of a spade and was preparing to explore the hole into which the fox had crept. Suddenly the old woman seized the tails of his red coat, and tried to drag him away from his projected job—a most laughable spectacle. For the Master was no "Flurry Knox," but a dignified, middle-aged ex-cavalry officer, and landowner of weight in the county, and well known in the Dublin and London clubs. In the meantime as it was one of the many church holidays, about fifty or so of those "young men of Ireland" so frequently invoked by their orators to deeds of blackguardism, had come on the scene, not intending trouble, but merely to watch the hunt. Still they were crowding round in a silent, half-menacing fashion. For the feeling was growing that made the years '79 to '81, if memory serves me, very troubrous ones. Anyway it was thought better to take the hounds home. Not long after this an attempt was made to stop hunting in the county. It was thought desirable that the Master, continuing his financial support, should hand over the Mastership in the field to Larry, who was more popular with "the people." This was tried for two years, but I think financial difficulties in the face of veiled opposition proved too much, and the County Hounds, an old-established pack, to the sorrow of their members became a matter of history. Poor Larry got very little more hunting in his life.

Two or three times when I was out, hounds met at B——

Park. The owner was then what was known as a "Sunday man," the Sabbath being the only day he could venture out for fear of his creditors. Larry said the estate had practically vanished up to the park gates. The place suggested an income of, say, £5000 a year. The problem of the family's existence was the puzzle of their neighbours. The father prided himself on resembling Napoleon the Third even to his Imperial, but as he couldn't show himself about there could not have been much fun in that. There were two daughters, bright, well-bred girls, fine horsewomen and out hunting on the days I was there. Larry said they went to England betimes as governesses, but Irish-like no one was supposed to know it. Anything less like governesses than these young women when hounds were running I never saw. There were two sons of about Larry's age. The elder, of the "Flurry Knox" type, a fine tall figure of a man, but with a good deal of unbalanced swagger and bluster. He was rather laughed at for this by his neighbours, and not too popular, and known as "the Pope." He sold a good horse now and again, which it was said kept the household going. The house was thrown open when hounds met there, and whisky and sherry lavishly dispensed. I well remember the bareness of the rooms and the forlorn, unkempt look of the large gardens on to which the windows opened.

These last days of the hunting season coincided with the best month of the trout fishing. But there was little attention paid to that. The locals were all absorbed in horses, save for a little not very energetic shooting in its season. Larry's devotion to fishing, which had waned a little from lack of companionship, was regarded as almost eccentric by his friends. Besides his home river, there were two or three beautiful streams that found their source in the Slieve Bloom mountains, and ran down through the lower country by many pleasant scenes, by woods and meadows, by whitewashed, straw-thatched farms, by water mills, by peaty commons ablaze with gorse, and were full of small trout. We used to drive out and spend a long day

following one or other of them up or down stream to some point where the outside-car would meet us in the evening. As we only went out when conditions were favourable, we nearly always brought home enough trout to make Larry's rather weird kitchen domestics exhaust their whole racy vocabulary of wonderment as we tipped out our baskets into their bowls and dishes, and they hauled off our soaking boots by the kitchen fire.

The country-folk had little turn for fishing, but they took plenty of interest in us. No toil was so urgent but that the toiler could leave it at once for the riverside if he caught sight of either of us. If it were I, there was some excuse, as I really think that in the course of years I was the only Englishman ever seen about in that country, though it was only fifty miles from Dublin and on a main line. "Mister Larry will be on the river, Sor?" was always the pretext for the visitation. If Larry were first envisaged there was the whole range of local gossip to discuss. A year or so after one of my earlier visits the old postman remarked to Larry, "An' when will the great writer from England be coming again, Sor?" Let me hasten to add this had no reference to any literary distinction, but merely that my correspondence accumulating under these many distracting diversions, I sometimes despatched a dozen letters at a time, a budget wholly outside the old man's experience of the house.

Larry was pretty regular at Petty Sessions at the rather poor little town two miles off. I occasionally went with him, and remained if there happened to be a vacant seat on the Bench, as the proceedings were sometimes a great deal more entertaining than most plays. Among the local oddities was an old gentleman who when present always took the chair at Petty Sessions. He was a magnificent man in appearance, about six foot three in height and of stalwart build. He had a rather underhung jaw, and looked as dogged as he was, and though a man of good family and property had a brogue you could cut with a knife. He was well off and had a biggish house, which

few people saw the inside of, as he had a passion for secluding himself and, unfortunately for them, his daughters. He had also a worthier passion for agriculture, and the Bench groaned under the long irrelevant discussions on chemical manures, or seed potatoes that he carried on with witnesses, plaintiffs or defendants, or anyone else that gave him half a chance. Larry used to come back fuming an hour late for lunch when the old man was on the Bench. His judgments, too, were deplorably influenced by passion and prejudice, though held in check by the clerk and his fellow-magistrates. One famous occasion was always told of, when after fining some delinquent a pound for a half-crown offence, and on the clerk reminding him that it was not within the law, the old fellow roared out in his rich brogue, "I don't care what the Law is, but I know what I'll do." He used to boast that he had never been out of Ireland. But later on his married daughter, of whom a word later, inveigled him over to Paris. A youngish neighbour of his, whom like many others I came to know very well, to his amazement ran into old S—— roaming the boulevards, like a homesick old mastiff, transported with joy at the sight of a friend and fellow-countryman, and bursting with abuse of the unintelligible foreigners that surged around him. Our friend thought it much too good a chance to be missed, and immediately shifted his quarters to the hotel where the old man was staying with his married daughter who had brought him over. And as the management and most of the guests were French the humour of the situation was complete. Often in later years this amusing fellow entertained us with the sayings of the homespun old Irish squire during his memorable visit to Paris. It was like a bit out of Lever.

But in regard to the daughter her story was romantic. Men, as I have stated, had always been kept at arm's length. But by an amazing piece of good fortune an English officer of repute in his profession had a bad accident, I think hunting, so close to the house he had to be taken in, and there lay for some weeks. The result was the old, old

story. He fell in love with one of the ladies, but though an admirable match the old man, in accordance with his insane creed, would not hear of it. So the lovers took it into their own hands, and ran off together and got married without the paternal blessing. The husband prospered, achieved no little distinction, and when he died left his sorrowing widow with a handle to her name. In her biography of him she frankly tells the tale of her father's unreasonable obduracy and their consequent elopement. I can see him now, his huge form seated in the middle of the magistrates' rather cramped bench in the shabby little Court-house, his elbows shoved aggressively out on either side as if pushing his colleague aside to make the best of such inadequate space as was left to them.

It was during the earlier 'eighties that a new sub-inspector arrived in the district, a tall, fair, rosy-faced, blue-eyed young Englishman from Cambridge, a pleasant fellow, and a good cricketer, but entirely green as to all the pursuits and pastimes and ideas that comprised Irish country life as there represented. He was received in friendly fashion by the neighbourhood, and though there was no local cricket in which to show his prowess he shone easily at such lawn tennis as there was. But it soon transpired that the young Englishman had no horse knowledge beyond the ordinary riding school course. The idea of a smart young police officer, with private means too, not hunting was unthinkable in that region. So under the pressure of public opinion he bought another horse besides the charger allowed him, and the boys home from school undertook to teach him to jump. They laid out a course for him, and put up obstacles of all kinds, and hustled the good-natured young policeman and his horse over them, not without some disasters that delighted their mischievous souls.

In due course the tyro was beginning to learn the great secret of life in that country. At any rate, he was seen constantly about on horseback, and even went cautiously out with the hounds. But he was still regarded as rather lacking in the great essential thing, nor did he do his

reputation any good by inadvertently cantering into one of the "green" bogs, mistaking it for a strip of fresh turf, by the roadside, from which he and his horse were extricated with some difficulty. As an East Anglian such a blunder was perhaps excusable. Despite this he was coming slowly along in horse lore when all at once he sprang with one leap into fame, and achieved an unshakeable position for all time. For it so fell about, that he was driving out to dinner one night in his smart dogcart, with the hunter in the shafts. Larry was beside him, and his policeman servant sitting behind. It was after dinner on the return, however, that the great thing happened. Now at Belmullet, as we will call the house of the dinner, dividing the garden portion of the drive from that in the park is one of those fairly low gates in two parts that close, with a hasp, in the middle. Probably it had been left open for them on arrival, and therefore unnoticed by the driver. Larry must have known it well, but as a passenger was not observing closely. At any rate, the sub-inspector, with the glow of a good dinner inside him, sent his horse gaily along in the darkness down the short sweep from the front door regardless of any obstacle. The horse, accustomed to being sent over all sorts of strange obstacles in the course of his master's jumping lessons from his young friends, no doubt regarded this merely as a fresh experiment, rose nobly at the gate, and with a mighty crash and heave and a little splintering of top rails, landed dogcart and all safe and sound upon the other side. Larry was sent flying, the policeman on top of him, but when they picked themselves up the sub-inspector was sitting safe and sound upon the driving seat from which he had never been shifted, the reins in his hand. This made him. It went all over the country how he had leapt his horse and trap clean over a gate at Belmullet. The people spoke of it as "Misther M——'s great lep." The "gate" of the adventure soon became the lodge gate into the high road, which was massive and at least six foot high.

Through the later 'eighties and earlier 'nineties, when



"DASH" AND "NELL" WITH FINIAN, 1887

living in England again, I generally went to Larry for the shooting, and mainly for the partridges, which in Ireland opened on September 20th. It differed entirely from the same sport in England even in pre-driving days. There was no walking stubbles and pastures and shoving birds into roots. As a grass country and an always much-poached one, and little keeper'd as regards vermin, partridges were everywhere but thinly distributed. But then Larry had the shooting over anything from ten to twenty thousand acres, and that made just the difference. In that country, too, setters or pointers were an absolute necessity, there was so much rough cover for birds. Without them you might just as well have stayed at home. A brace of setters, one companion, a man to carry the bag, and a virtually boundless beat was my ideal of enjoyable shooting. I had been used to that for many previous years abroad, though under rather different conditions. I had it here for many seasons with Larry and his dogs. He took immense pains, too, with his red setters, always breaking them himself, having a great gift and patience for it. This sort of thing entailed an enormous amount of walking, and on some beats an inordinate number of fences to negotiate.

Some wag called Irish partridge shooting "one day of jumping fences and two more of picking out thorns." But there were always great wide stretches of heather and moor grass along the lower slope of the mountains, and also the ragged and dry edges of the great flat bogs, sections, in fact, of the famous Bog of Allan. Packs of grouse that Larry and his friends had taken toll of in the past August would constantly rise far away as wild as hawks, and it was rarely enough we caught one napping in October. The migrant snipe had not come in, and though we picked up a native one occasionally, it was not good for dogs hunting partridges. There would be what was called a "half-keeper" to watch the different sections of the estate, a small farmer generally at £5 or £10 a year. These functionaries always joined us, as they were by way of knowing where the coveys were. They had any amount of most

edifying conversation as we walked along, for silence is of no consequence when following wide-ranging dogs in a big country. The tenants of the land we were passing over would also frequently come out and walk a bit, and they had even more to say. Larry, as I have remarked, was an unusual favourite, and though they were then all members of Land Leagues and all sorts of other societies, you would have supposed they were old crusted Tories by the way they denounced this, that and the other man, or set of men, who were up against their "best of landlords" and "making trouble in the country" and all the rest of it. However, this is a familiar story, and has imposed on many an English tourist.

But we were fairly had on one occasion. Now it so happened that two or three years previously a priest stationed in this district proved an incorrigible poacher and a dead shot as well—so much so that under urgent representation his bishop shifted him to Dublin. We had come one day about noon to a little farm under the hills, in whose patch of tillage the half-keeper, who was quite reliable, had put up a covey of sixteen birds on the previous afternoon. In due course in some rough stuff above the house the dogs began drawing, and were soon standing stiff. A single bird only got up to the point and was duly dropped. The covey had been scattered, no doubt, we supposed, by a hawk or something, and would give us all the prettier shooting. But to shorten my story we drew every bit of that ground with a thoroughness that proved beyond any doubt that the other fifteen birds were neither there nor whereabouts. Their fresh marks were all over the place, and coveys don't vanish like that for nothing and leave a lone bird behind. However, we registered it as an unfathomable mystery to be chronicled in Larry's sporting journal, which he kept religiously his whole life. Next morning at breakfast the maid announced that the keeper from our beat of yesterday ten miles away was in the yard, and we both went out. He had a great tale to tell. The holy man mentioned as having been shifted from the district

for poaching, had passed down to the station to the early train that morning with a lot of partridges. The farm of the mysterious single bird belonged to his cousin. He had been down there for a couple of nights, so the keeper ascertained, and beyond a doubt he had cleaned out our covey in the early morning, and was probably looking out of the window at us vainly hunting for it. The "joke was on us," as the Americans say, and badly that time. We only averaged about ten brace a day, but I have always looked back on those long tramps over so much varied country behind Larry's well-broken, staunch and tireless dogs, as the most delightful of all my shooting recollections. I need hardly say that alternate days were quite enough for both men and dogs, or should have been. Yet incredible as it sounds, and in truth as it seemed at the time, on driving home in the dark it was all that the man "Finian" and I could do to hold these big strong dogs in the trap, and an outside car is not a handy conveyance in which to grapple with a struggling dog on the seat beside you. It was not any objection to riding in the car for itself with these insatiable dogs. But they had always their sensitive noses in the air, and a strong whiff of scent of game from over the fence used to drive this particular pair to frenzy, though they must have run a hundred miles in the course of the day. With one arm for security hooked round the central rail of the car, and only one for the dogs, we used to have frightful struggles with their strong lithe bodies to keep them from jumping out and hanging by their chains. Larry, placidly driving on the other seat, used to think it a great joke when "Dash" and "Nell" maybe had struggled up on to Finian's head and shoulders, with the lad's arms clasped despairingly round the dog's body!

On one of these shooting visits to Larry I had forgotten that the Crimes Act was in force, which required an official permit to take a gun into Ireland. On arriving at the North Wall Station off the boat early in the morning I was accosted by an official, who, pointing to my gun-case, asked for my permit. I was aghast, particularly as I was to meet

Larry at a wayside station short of M——, and begin shooting near there at midday. I tried everything, pointed out that I was going to a magistrate's house, and could get every necessary endorsement of respectability while I sent to England for my licence. I knew, too, that Larry had not a second gun fit for use. Not a bit of it. My friend was adamant. Having experience of his fellow-countrymen in like position in America, I next proceeded to offer him £10. He was quite hurt, not at the sum, but at the bare idea of such a thing. I can't think why, after this, I offered him a drink, but I did, and we repaired to the refreshment room opened early for the boat passengers. He selected fourpennyworth of gin, which he drank off neat, while I pledged him in something almost as objectionable at that hour in the morning. As we strolled back to the waiting train his whole attitude suddenly changed. He seized my gun-case, caught up a bag that was with it, asked what class I was travelling, found an empty carriage, opened the door, put my things, gun and all, into it, and exclaimed with the greatest cordiality, "Ah now, sure you can take yer gun, that'll be all right, and a pleasant journey to ye," with which he vanished. My relief was great, but the workings of that strange mentality I could not fathom. But it did occur to me he was oddly constituted for a Government Inspector.

He was a very different sort of Irish official from one that a friend of mine encountered at the Customs on landing at New York in 1894. He was going on a visit to a brother at Cleveland, and not knowing what to do with a favourite old bulldog, had brought the animal across with him. On passing through the Customs, one of the officials, an Irishman, told him he must pay twenty-five dollars' duty on the dog. "Then," said my friend, "I shall send him back home." Which he did, the captain kindly undertaking the charge. During a short stay in New York, and while at a dinner party, he happened to relate this little incident to the lady sitting next him. When the ladies had retired, a man who had been sitting opposite came round, and

taking the chair beside him said that he could not help overhearing something of the story he had just been telling, and would be much obliged if he would repeat it in detail, as he himself was the Chief of the Customs ! Having heard it, he asked my friend if he should know the man again, to which he replied that he was confident that he would. "Then," said the officer, "will you as a favour to me come down to the Custom House to-morrow morning." My friend, though a little loth to be bothered with it, consented. When he arrived, the Chief had about twenty men waiting outside his room. "Now, sir," said he, "will you please pick out your man." The other did this without any difficulty, and the culprit was dismissed then and there. The man brought a harrowing "wife-and-family" story to my friend, who did intercede for him, but it was no good. There was no such duty then on dogs, and in any case this underling was not qualified to settle and demand it. It was a case of bluff and graft.

Save a few wild birds this wasn't a pheasant country. But Larry always raised a few in a particular wood between his place and the little neighbouring town of M—— before alluded to. He used to pay an old man, an Army pensioner, who lived by himself near the spot, to watch them and an adjoining snipe bog. He was a great character, this pensioner, with a boundless and outspoken contempt for the popular creed and its agitators. One day he came to Larry and asked for the loan of a gun.

"What on earth do you want a gun for, Cassidy ? "

"For them divils from M——, Misther Larry."

"But you can't shoot them ! "

"Shoot 'em, your Honour ? and me that's seen the fine British officers and gentlemen wallowing in their gore on the bloody fields of Sobraon and Mooltan ! Shoot a few b—— b—— from M—— I'd shoot 'em like dogs ! "

The old hero, however, didn't get his gun ! Larry used to pay his farm hands 1s. 1d. per day, a penny more than the farmers' rate. He always said they were relatively no cheaper than a Wiltshireman at 2s. or a Scotsman at 3s.,

the current wages of that day. But if leisurely in their movements they always seemed healthy enough.

During one of my visits to Larry I went down for two or three days to Killarney to have a brief look at that lovely district. The Irish trains kept shocking time in those days, but when they had to make it up one's nerves were sometimes tested on such occasions far more than one's patience was on normal times. One sympathised with Mr. Le Fanu's priest, who when the train was wildly rocking, expressed his anxiety to a country woman placidly knitting in a corner of the carriage. "Ah, be asy, yer Riverence, sure an' it's my Tim be dthrivin' an' whin he's got the dthrap in him he's the boy that can make her lep." At Killarney I dined at the barracks with the Inspector, an Englishman and Oxford man, and an old friend of our family. Later on he rose to high office at Headquarters. I remember his telling me that he had served in every county in Ireland, and remarking on the differences in the character of their respective populations quoted two, which he regarded as quite hopeless, and irremediably rotten, namely, those of Clare and Mayo, though he had his hands full enough with Kerry.

I spent a night, too, with my old friend, "the Senior Classic" of my Cambridge and schoolboy days, who had inherited a small property near Killarney, where with his wife, a daughter of the Archbishop of Dublin, he spent his long vacations. He received about this time threatening letters of the usual illiterate sort with the skull and cross bones decorations, and came down one morning to find a grave dug on his lawn. The whole thing, seeing his blameless personal character, distinguished position in the world of scholarship and letters, and, I think, quite trifling landed interest, though disquieting no doubt to him, was regarded when published in the papers as almost a joke in its misdirected and purposeless malevolence. However, we have since seen far worse things than that done, and to as blameless people. But that a British Government would be terrified by them into an abject surrender of everything they stood for, and an abandonment of all their friends who

had stood by them, would have been outside the wildest dreams of either English or Irish gentlemen in those days. However, as the British public are quite indifferent and never have either known or cared two straws about what is happening in Ireland, the politicians responsible have, I take it, lost no sleep, either on account of their own record or their victims' fate.

I entered my name on that occasion at the Great Southern Hotel for a place in one of their vehicles that made a daily round of the lakes and mountains. Being the end of the season, and very few guests, I found myself allotted to a small wagonette with three Australian girls, sisters, who proved most lively damsels, while Papa and Mamma followed behind with their eye on them, as it were. Their high spirits, I found, were due to the fact that they had been travelling incessantly about the world for a year, and been compelled to see every sight on the face of the civilized earth, and it was the very last day of this weary educative process. "Thank the Lord!" I am afraid they all added in chorus. They had obviously been consoling themselves of late, when out of parental earshot, by ragging cicerones and custodians of the world's wonder spots. For when it became our poor Jarvey's duty to point out places of interest on lake and mountain, above all when a legend had to be told, these incorrigible young ladies greeted his announcements with shouts of chaff and derision. Poor man, I felt quite sorry for him. I had to remind myself of what these high-spirited lasses had perhaps been through, for beyond a doubt they were very naughty, though I am bound to admit were rather funny. But they exhausted their witticisms and quieted down after a time, and we had an enjoyable picnic lunch on an island in one of the lakes.

Another little expedition of a very different sort I made was on the occasion of the rioting at Tipperary that caused a great stir at the time, and the trial there of William O'Brien, Sexton and four other leading Nationalists. John Morley was there and several English Radical M.P.'s studying the Irish question on the spot (in a week). Under a no-rent

propaganda, it had been attempted to move all the tenants out of the place into a makeshift town entitled New Tipperary, and thus cripple the landlord. As Mr. Smith Barry was one of the wealthiest owners in the South, and was little affected by it, it was generally said that a more stupid selection for a test case could hardly have been made. At the trial the little gallery in the shabby Court-house was crowded with the lady friends of the prisoners. In the front row was a most fearsome-looking female, with a long nose and a black moustache. A constable from M—— drafted down for the occasion, whom I knew, was one of the doorkeepers. I saw him beckoning to me, and on crossing over, he laid one hand on my arm and with the other pointed up to the gallery, and said in a sort of awestruck voice: "Do you see that, Sorr?" His meaning was obvious and I said that I did. "There's not another man in all Ireland would have married that woman but William O'Brien." I don't suppose for a moment that this weird apparition was Mrs. O'Brien. But that prominent agitator then in the dock had recently married a lady of some fortune, and an absurd rumour had it that she was a Russian Nihilist. Hence, no doubt, the constable's assumption that the moustachio gorgon in the gallery must be she. There were some curious-looking Englishmen, I remember, hanging about among the excited crowd that day at Tipperary—sympathetic politicians or journalists "being taken care of," as the Americans say, no doubt by local politicians and priests. There was one prominent figure among them, and I can see him now, known in the local press as "The Sthriplin'." An Oxford undergraduate, and looking every inch one, of the untidier type just then coming into fashion. A quite green English youth with some gift of the gab, and, no doubt, a light at the Union debates, he had been put in by Parnell as Member for some wild western district. His bare and rather tously head had been cracked the day before, and was overlaid with large strips of sticking plaster. He didn't look ornamental, but I think he felt rather heroic. Mr. Dillon was

stalking about, I remember, long and gloomy in sombre black raiment, surmounted by a shabby white bowler hat. Mr. Morley, not yet Irish Secretary, had left that morning. I had no particular wish, however, to meet him in that arena, though I had the honour of his acquaintance. As Editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* and *Macmillan's Magazine*, I had written several articles for him in both, mostly on the Southern States, in which he was rather interested, and I had dined with him *à deux* at the Reform Club. As a matter of fact, though I rarely saw him again, I owe John Morley an immense debt.

During Larry's bachelor days his quite modest household was run plentifully but casually, and in that he was very much of an Irishman. The domestics about him had been mostly bred on the place, and regarded him with a mixture of awe—he had a hard manner when he liked—affection, and tempered familiarity. I have stated before that he had a strong streak of sentiment in him, though I doubt if any of his local friends and neighbours, who had certainly none themselves, ever even suspected it. He was very fond of music in a simple way, so far, that is to say, as airs and melodies went. I don't suppose he ever heard or thought of any other. His mother's drawing-room had been little used since her death when he was a child. It was a charming, sunny room too, and its Early Victorian furniture, with all the accessories, eloquent of a bride in the 'forties in a simple country house quite out of the great world, always appealed to me. In such an essentially bachelor household as this had always been to me, it seemed strange to step into a room that in every corner spoke of a woman who, save perhaps for the period of its decorations, might have just vacated it, but had actually been in the grave for thirty or forty years.

Her portrait hung on the wall, a pretty dark-eyed young woman with a curiously sensitive face. She was of the "ould stock," and the Celt in her no doubt accounted for the unexpected streak in Larry's otherwise robust make-up. Her grand piano, on which old people said she had been a notable

performer, looked as if it was waiting for her to come down again and play it. Yet nobody ever touched it but myself, and that, I fear, in no such fashion as did the gentle fingers of its long dead owner on the wall, even had it been in tune. But it was good enough for Larry, who only asked for airs and melodies, and I could play from ear after a fashion almost any of the better known airs, Scotch, English or Irish. So we used to go into the drawing-room sometimes after dinner, and Larry used to settle down in an arm-chair and lean back with his eyes shut like an expert awaiting some classical masterpiece. Then we used to go through the *repertoire*, mostly keeping on the sad and sentimental note. My audience didn't care for rollicking strains. Tom Moore naturally moved him most, and at certain melodies of that little gentleman, I used always to see Larry surreptitiously brushing away a tear from his weather-beaten cheek. This was tremendously gratifying, of course. I never brought tears from anyone else's eyes, I am quite sure.

If this were all, however, the telling of it would hardly be worth while. But after the concert had begun one used to hear doors opening stealthily from the back regions into the hall, and we came to know that this was the servants, who had never heard that piano going in their lives or any other instrument probably but a fiddle at the cross-road dances. They were out stealthily to make a second audience behind the door. They would have been satisfied, no doubt, with this had I not broken out occasionally for my own amusement with some tags of waltzes and gallops. This was too much for them. Then there would come through the closed door a faint but steady swishing of dresses over the hall floor, and we knew that they were dancing. We never let on that we knew it, for they were simple creatures. It was the old cook, between sixty and seventy, so Larry's confidential manservant told us, who made the daring stroke and led the dance. So on the musical evenings, when Larry had dropped his tributary tear to his favourites of song, I used to put the pedals down, and fetch them out from their lairs with "Weel may the keel row," being the only jig I

knew, and the swishing in the hall was soon in evidence. We never showed and were not supposed to know, what was going on, a very polite fiction indeed.

Politics in those days, of course, shared the conversation of the neighbourhood with sport and farming. Several people had known Parnell more or less in his country squire days, hunting, cricketing and dancing. None of them, I remember, had liked him. But they were all mightily impressed with his amazing development and drew not a little satisfaction, being one of themselves, from the contemptuous way he whipped his followers in to heel. Larry was always strongly in favour of Land Purchase ; the Ashbourne Act, its first instalment, had just come in. His knowledge of the subject was, in fact, recognized by his appointment under the Land Commission. He thought that with the farmers their own landlords, Home Rule would be killed. Anyone would have thought so. For who could have foretold that the Agitator, the Assassin, the vicarious Assassin and the Priest could stir to anarchy an Ireland whose people at that moment were the most materially prosperous in Europe.

I have looked on at two cricket matches in Ireland. One of them was at the Phœnix Park, when the Gentlemen of Ireland were playing the Philadelphians. I went up with an old Irish cricketer who had played with me at Philadelphia many years previously. He was very much annoyed, I remember, with the Phœnix Club Committee for not having selected his younger brother, and took the opportunity of telling the Secretary so, rather tartly, as we stood on the ground. "But you see, M——," said that official, "it was bowling we wanted."

"It was not," snapped out the other, "it was common sense you wanted."

It was in that same year when I chanced, for once in a way, to be at Larry's in August, that I drove about twenty miles to a match with our old acquaintance, the sub-inspector, who was going to play for a local team against a regiment from Templemore. It was with the same trap and horse, too, that had cleared the gate at Belmullet. The ground

was in a nobleman's park, and as it was a public holiday of some sort there was a crowd of country-folk to support the local side, and a considerable gathering of soldiers to encourage their own team. My friend was playing, I merely a spectator, though an interested one, as it was the only country match I had ever seen in Ireland. There was no accommodation on the ground but a small tent, just large enough to hold the scorer and his table.

During the game I happened to be standing near this, when the scorer asked me if I would mind taking his place for a few minutes. In this interval a batsman of the home side made one of the biggest square leg hits I ever saw in my life. The ball disappeared over the edge of the visible ground and ran down a steep hill, I believe, into a stream at the bottom. Half the field were after it, but they failed to call "lost ball" till seven runs had been made, with which figures I duly credited the striker. The crowd standing round, however, insisted that it must be 13, the seven added to the lost ball six. Half a dozen dirty thumbs were pressed on to the scoring sheet, and as many whiskyfied voices perfumed the air above it. Those outside took up the refrain, "Thirteen, begor, ivery wan of them for Misther O'Brien's great sthrike." Then the soldiers, who, of course, knew better, crowded up, and called out, "Seven, Seven," with many accompanying flowers of speech, and jibes at the ignorance of their rivals. Then something like a Rugby football scrimmage surged against the little tent, its pegs gave way, and it flopped over, burying me under its folds. I crept out unscathed, and left someone else to finally settle the amount of Misther O'Brien's great sthrike.

But Larry didn't remain always a bachelor. Some years before my visits ceased he married a pretty and charming wife from the county of Tipperary. Indeed, much as I had enjoyed my visits to his bachelor home, I appreciated them even more, I think, after his marriage, when the shooting programme went on as before. That the easy-going domestic regime underwent a change goes without saying, though the aged cook, being a treasure, remained, but she no longer

danced breakdowns in the hall, while the drawing-room piano reverted again to better uses than my inconsequent strummings. But Mrs. Larry brought with her the same vivid sense of humour, the same keen eye for the funny side of everything and everybody as her husband, and even greater powers of mimicry and rendering of the vernacular. As a woman, too, she tapped sources, and discovered new characters that had escaped her husband in his bachelor life, and brought them into the common stock. To hear the pair of them together dropping naturally into a fancy dialogue between two local originals, gentle or simple, was inimitably funny. A couple of children proved Larry to be one of the most doting fathers to be found anywhere. And then, alas, a sad and unexpected end came to all this.

It was in '94. I arrived as usual on September 19th, and we were to begin shooting next day. To my surprise, for Larry was a man who neverailed, he complained of being out of sorts, but was confident of "walking it off" during the coming fortnight. We hadn't been shooting half an hour, however, when he came to a stop, and was taken with violent vomiting. After that he declared himself better, and there seemed so far nothing particularly alarming. But in a very short time he said that he could not go on, which coming from him meant everything.

Now Larry, like many boys, had begun a journal at sixteen. This was a purely sporting diary, thus proclaimed in boyish hand on the first page. Luckily it was an unusually thick manuscript book, for unlike most boys, though he hated writing, he kept it without a break for his entire life. Every day's hunting, shooting or fishing, with results and companions, and short comments, was religiously but briefly entered, if he merely took a gun out and shot a wood pigeon, or, again, caught a couple of trout below the house. It was sent to me after his death, and I kept it till his son grew up. I could turn back in it to our early days of fishing in Scotland, with date, water and the number of trout we each caught recorded with precision. I doubt if there is a parallel case to be found of such persistence, and this, too, from a

man who greatly disliked writing. But this day, the 20th September, 1894, was the last entry of the thirty years' record. He never held a rod or fired a gun, nor mounted a horse again. The local doctor was non-committal. The Dublin doctor was decided, and Larry died peacefully in his sleep of heart complaint early in the following spring. The property was sold, and his widow in due course married again, but away into the West of Ireland.

CHAPTER XII

CONCLUSION

I WENT to Canada in the spring of 1873 on an Allan liner of 2600 tons, which took a fortnight to reach Portland Maine, the winter terminus of the Grand Trunk. My first experience of American scenery, of which I was to see so much in the coming years, was on that beautiful run through the White Mountains to Montreal. My destination was Peterborough, then a little town of 5000 population, between Montreal and Toronto, and for many reasons an admirable vantage point for a visitor anxious to see as much as possible of Canada. The latter for an intending settler was then virtually confined to the Province of Ontario. For Quebec, being mainly French and reactionary, was outside consideration. The Maritime Provinces were already more or less "side-tracked." There was as yet no West. But though Ontario is immense on the map, practically all of it worth clearing of the timber which had covered every foot of old Canada east of the still unexploited Prairies had been already cleared and occupied in well-established farms of from one to two hundred acres, lying back from the shores of the Great Lakes, Ontario, Erie and Huron. Behind this undulating, open tract of civilization was an illimitable backwoods wilderness stretching northwards into space. This forest hinterland was no longer worth the immigrants' notice, even as free-grants. It was mostly poor and rocky. The rich American prairies were now capturing nearly all trans-Atlantic immigration. Lumbering, mining and tourist traffic, with the labour attracted by them, have to be sure been cutting into this backwoods

wilderness ever since, but the farming immigrant shied at it sixty years ago, and with good reason.

All Ontario then, with negligible exceptions, worth farming was, by 1873, opened and occupied in more or less well-equipped farms, worth from £8 to £20 per acre, roughly the figures for the next thirty years. To immigrants with any capital there was no catch in putting, say, £2000 into a 150-acre farm and working as did the Ontario farmers, about twice as hard as an English agricultural labourer to make an ordinary commercial percentage. Mere ownership of itself is not all that sentimental outsiders and townspeople think it is, and in Canada a farm could not, if the need arose be always disposed of. Two thousand pounds would have stocked a Dorset or Essex farm of 250 acres. That was in brief the position of Canada in 1873, even before the great approaching slump. Sound enough for the Canadian farmers, to whom hard manual toil and frugal living were a sort of fetish. But for others Canada offered no further attraction, though the North-West was just dawning. It may be stated at once, too, and as a common truism that the better class in Canada never took up farming as a business. They despised it as a waste of education and a boor's life, though they do not often proclaim that opinion upon the house-tops or in their walks abroad. The exceptions are negligible, though numbers of English gentlemen for all time have ventured Ontario farming, both as genuine farmers in the "Front," or tempted by sport and a wild life as backwoodsmen. To scarcely any has it been but a passing and unprofitable phase; many have succumbed to it.

But for myself my intention was merely to spend a year in Canada gaining experience of the country and the people, and to proceed the following spring to Manitoba, then usually called the Red River country. I found it regarded as a premature and rather mad proceeding, but no one in fact knew much about the region. It was nearly a fortnight's journey by various rather primitive methods of progress. The C.P.R. had been in part surveyed through the savage

easterly section of its projected route. Half Canada thought it would never be built at all, and in the meantime such few pioneers as had gone up to the North-West had staked their future on its creation. For in such case land would vastly increase, as it actually did, in value. In the meantime life up there was reported as very difficult, the climate for its severity not yet being really proven fit to retain an agricultural population. Grasshoppers, hailstorms and early frosts were with much truth prominent items in travellers' tales. Half-breeds and Indians so lately in rebellion were none too friendly. On the other hand, the inexhaustible fertility of the soil and high quality of the grain was not disputed. But the reports of those who knew the country were often in direct conflict. It came to be said in Ontario that no one who went to Winnipeg could ever speak the truth again ! In brief, it was a gamble whether or not the railroad would be put through, and if so when. But as I did not go there after all, till on several occasions as a visitor in years to come, I need say nothing more here of the eventual completion of the C.P.R. and the ultimate development of the great North-West of Canada.

I spent the summer, autumn and winter, with a break of, to me, vital moment, in Ontario, and saw most sides of life there, both of social life in Toronto and in one or two of the little Ontario towns which were in those days all centres of a simple but pleasant society. The exclusive spirit of the old United Empire loyalist settlers blended with the half-pay officer element still obtained both in the capital and the country towns. Triumphant democracy, which captured them entirely a generation later, was still held at bay. Retail trade, however prosperous, was still in the shade, and as I have said there was no "gentleman farming" with Canadians : they knew too much. The banker, the lawyer, the merchant, the retired officer, held the social fort everywhere. Incomes were small, but living extraordinarily cheap ; life simple, but in a manner gay. There were pleasant coteries of this kind all over Ontario and much linked up with one another ; Toronto, itself then but

a larger edition of the others, forming something of a centre. The English garrisons which had only just been withdrawn had naturally helped to foster what compared to later days was an exclusive spirit. Canada was still a poor country, and small incomes went very far. Peterborough was as pleasant as any of the little towns at that time. There were picnics and dances, all the outdoor winter sports as, of course, canoeing and camping out among innumerable lakes and rivers in the back country, with the shooting and fishing accompanying it. Married members of this pleasant society, here and elsewhere, lived quite comfortably on private or professional incomes of from £300 to £500 a year. The tariff of the best hotel was a dollar a day inclusive ! There was an excellent club, too, plainly equipped and with a sufficient but plain table where many of the bachelors with rooms in the town had their meals. I am afraid to quote the weekly tariff for fear of overstraining the faith of my readers. The only residents of anything like wealth were among the shopkeepers, who did not yet count, and the big lumber operators, who did. Otherwise money counted for nothing. There was in truth in those days something like a caste throughout Canada, surviving from the old loyalist, " Family Compact " and anti-American times, with a touch of the old military spirit, out of which British Canada was evolved.

British Canada had not been settled like Australia and New Zealand. She may, in truth, be called the very child and nurseling of war. Created and settled by refugee loyalist regiments after the American War of Independence, she had to fight for her life against her ancient foes a generation later in 1812-15. Again after Waterloo Canada was flooded with disbanded British soldiers and officers with grants and pensions. There were old men still living in my time who had fought in the victorious war of 1812-15, and regarded their American neighbours with the hereditary antagonism that after all contributed to the saving of Canada in that epoch-making period. The military influx following 1815, the British garrisons quartered till 1871 all over the country, and the innumerable marriages of Canadian ladies to British

officers kept alive the resistance to democratic ideas in social life. All this was swept away, save in two or three cities, when the country got richer, life more expansive and commercialism captured the towns. Twenty and thirty years later, apart from their material development, they were socially unrecognizable by those who had known such places as Peterborough, Port Hope, Woodstock, Guelph and a dozen others in the 'sixties and 'seventies. A certain picturesqueness pervaded this old society which inevitably petered out or fused in less attractive, but far wealthier modern conditions. But I am drawing here on later experiences and must return to the present narrative.

With the full intention, as related, of taking the chances that the North-West had to offer in the following spring, though inspired, I fancy, as much by the romance of the venture as its practical side, I made the most of this year in Canada so far as my opportunities permitted. I spent several summer weeks camping and canoeing through the great back country of Ontario with its illimitable forests and numberless lakes and connecting rivers. For that and similar expeditions made in later years I had ultimate cause to be thankful, though in a fashion little suspected at the time. For in writing early Canadian and North American history I have good reason to think my early experiences in those forest solitudes and other American wilds served me in good stead. I also spent a month with a backwoodsman who was clearing a farm for the purpose of mastering the use of the axe as manipulated by all North Americans, an indispensable tool to any sort of country life then. A well-spent though mosquito-tortured month. In autumn I went with a party for a deer hunt on some lakes about fifty miles back, and there shot the only deer of my life. I well remember, as we lay at night in camp, the dismal howl of the wolves drawn south by the approach of winter, hunting on the track of deer.

But my plans now underwent a total change as I became engaged to be married. The North-West at once dropped out of all consideration. It was no place for a lady in those

days nor for years to come. As a matter of fact the prairie farm or ranch never did become fit for the gently nurtured woman, though their pluck has paved the prairie with unwritten tragedies. A farm in old Canada I had never even contemplated. Fortunately at this time I met some English people, retired officer-folk, who were living in Virginia and reported well of it. Here, again, was romance, though of another sort! I went down with them in the autumn to prospect and fell in love with the country on sight. Ultimately I bought a small estate there, returned to Canada with its cheerful festivities for the winter and spent the following spring and summer in getting my Virginia purchase in order. I was married in London in August and settled down in Virginia for what proved to be ten very happy years for both of us. From every point of view this unexpected change in my life was most fortunate. I have the strongest impression that the hardships of the North-West in those primitive days would have been too much for me. Very few, indeed, came successfully and alive out of them. Theoretically in such situations you buy land at five dollars and sell it later on at fifty. But in actual fact that seldom materializes, though the figures must do so, but in other hands! And in Manitoba the increase was very long in coming. Most of the pioneers unloaded before it came, and when they could get away they did. Under such disappointments, too, it was at that time a cruel and hard country to face. The romance of it faded before stern realities. I saw pretty clearly how it had been when I paid a long visit ten years later, and thanked my stars for the intervention of Providence in the guise of a young lady, who furthermore made me the best of wives for over half a century. And again, but for the fortuitous meeting with those Anglo-Virginians in Canada, our lives must have taken some other shape. Virginia, I do not think, would then have occurred to me. After all, I suppose most lives but those laid in a groove from the first are the sport of such chances.

Our home in Virginia lay near the foot of the Blue Ridge

mountains which run north and south right through the State at an elevation of from three to four thousand feet. The scenery was indescribably beautiful. The mountains were wooded to their summits, not with pine and kindred evergreens like those of New England and Canada, but with oak, chestnut, poplar and other deciduous trees, displaying a waving sea of leaves from base to summit in summer, and in autumn right up to December a blaze of colour, red, brown, gold and saffron, that made even the autumn tints of Canada meagre by comparison. The lower country throughout our region and, indeed, most others, varied from gently undulating to as broken a surface as Devonshire, with a soil mostly as red, while rapid brooks watered the valleys. The climate was pleasant and healthy, hot in summer but perfect in spring and autumn, with a winter much like that of England but shorter and brighter.

There was something of a vogue for Virginia at that time among better class English settlers, retired officers and such like, and even a certain number of Scottish farmers, though personally I had not encountered it nor as a bachelor would have considered it. The American Civil War was then not long over, and this with the resultant abolition of slavery had left many Virginians impoverished and inclined to sell their estates at what seemed to the outside world, since they included buildings and often good houses, a low figure, though as events turned out they did not actually prove so. Above all, there was black labour, quite good in the field and tolerable in the house, and furthermore cheap. Life there did not mean the ceaseless manual toil of a Canadian or Northern farmer and ceaseless household drudgery for the wife. The Virginians had a good reputation, and on the whole deserved it. The educated class did not all live in towns as in Canada and the Northern States, and leave the farming wholly to energetic thrifty boors. Towns had occupied no place to speak of in their economy except for tobacco manufacturing, retail trade followed mostly by Jews and foreigners, together with legal and such like business. This all changed considerably afterwards, but when

we first knew Virginia the old traditions of country life for all classes, though crippled in its methods, still remained.

Much nonsense has been written by emotional and ill-informed American novelists and others about olden-time Virginia. A sort of cult and craze for this has exaggerated what in slavery days was a simple life with financial limitations that a small English squire would have almost called poverty. It did not affect the Virginians, for they never travelled. Their requirements were small, and their hospitalities to one another, though free, quite informal and almost limited to the products of the plantation. A wine cellar, for instance, in the English sense, hardly existed. The estates even of the better class had neither been large enough nor well enough farmed to produce incomes per acre approaching that of English land. When land after over two centuries of occupation with all its buildings was worth no more than £5 an acre, freehold, a full average for the State in slavery days, the income of 1000-acre property can be at once assessed. Moreover, 1000 acres was above the average size of the better class Virginia estate. The innumerable luxuries and decorative accessories indispensable to better class English country life were almost unknown. Dress alone of both men and women, particularly the former, had made far less demands. I lived then so near the war and among men who had fought and men and women who had been slave owners, that I became automatically familiar with the details of their former lives, the price and number of their negroes, while the value of land in this or that district became as an open book to me. Land varied greatly in quality, of course, with districts, much of it had been terribly exhausted by the reckless cultivation and bad farming of slavery days, and most of it badly let down. This was not the four years of war, but bad and immemorial custom.

Tobacco, as the mainstay, maize, wheat, oats and clover were the crops grown. The chief interest of post-war Virginia farming was in bringing or trying to bring the ill-treated lands, probably a third part of every plantation, back to fertility, and very interesting it was, if not very

profitable, when the Western prairies had put a spoke in our wheel. There were three fairly distinct classes of white people in Virginia. A small minority of "good families," which in the sense generally used, merely signified people with the manners, habits and education of gentlefolks as opposed to those of the common farmers, who were far more numerous and also owned much land and had been generally slave-owners, though mostly on a lesser scale. Below these last, the yeomanry as one may call them, came the poor degraded class of "mean whites." Some of the "good families" bore names prominent in the old colonial times and enjoyed a certain prestige on that account, as such families did in New England or New York, but others came of ordinary farming stock developed into something better since the Revolutionary war, with its abolition of entail. But no difference was recognized as to this, and I only mention the subject as so much nonsense has been written by imaginative and idealist writers on Old Virginia of "baronial halls," "princely incomes" and "vast estates." There was nothing approaching such things in Virginia at any time. The largest old houses on the James River, such as are celebrated in American magazines, all to be seen unaltered in my day, were no larger than several big farm-houses and spacious rectories that I could specify in England. There was scarcely an estate in Virginia before the Civil War that would have fetched as much as a single 500-acre farm in East Lothian at the same period, that is to say, £30,000. The average property of a Virginia gentleman, and I speak from a fairly wide and technical experience, had represented from £2000 to £8000 in land and, say, half as much again of capital in slaves, i.e. from 50 to 100 negroes, or 10 to 20 families. Neither slaves nor wealth nor luxury in the American slave States, of which S. Carolina was the richest, approached that of the West Indies, where some planters had owned 5000 slaves and enjoyed incomes of £20,000 a year, while the average was very high.

But the Virginians were none the worse for the comparative simplicity of their rearing and their general inexperience of

the great outer world. They were well-mannered, kindly people, and being proud of their unadulterated English origin, and at that time bitter against the lately victorious North, were glad to welcome English people of their own sort among them. They were bright and intelligent, too, with a good spice of humour, very sociable and great talkers. Save that they had the experience of a long war behind them, they had none, with rare exceptions, of any country or any life but their own, which had been on peculiar and inevitably limited lines. But they were all out to try and reform the bad old farming traditions of slavery days and bring their lands back into some sort of heart, which was not so easy as it sounds. For they had little or no capital left after the war, as their substance had been chiefly in slaves. While the fighting had seriously injured but a small patch of Virginia, war had exhausted the live stock a good deal and dislocated industry generally. But it is near enough the mark to say that in three-quarters of the farms or plantations as they were styled in Virginia an average of one-third of the land was exhausted to actual sterility and lay in broom sedge, briars or scrub pine. Of the rest a quarter might be in forest, which gave the country generally a rather woody appearance.

I have said that the common farmer, the yeoman, vastly prevailed in numbers over the higher class and in bulk owned a larger slice of the country. Though rough in appearance and habits of life, they were usually pleasant enough fellows, and had a tradition of good manners for which their social equivalents on Northern or Canadian farms were not distinguished. Perhaps the example of their betters accounted for this, for "out of doors" all men affected equality. They were easy-going, too, but then they had always had black labour,¹ though generally doing the lighter work themselves. The "good families" were distributed about the country very thinly in some parts, thicker in

¹ In 1860, out of a million white people in Virginia, there were 50,000 slave-owners, just half of whom had only four slaves and under, 114 owned a hundred slaves and upwards (Govt. statistics, 1860).

others, generally but not necessarily with more land and better houses than the others. These houses were mostly of red brick, in the plain, rectangular, late Georgian style with pillared porticoes. They were often most attractively situated on hill-tops and sheltered by big forest trees. Undoubtedly there was a charm about the country, apart from the outstanding physical beauty of many portions of it. There was a sort of easy-going, picturesque atmosphere about the life, to which the plantation negroes, probably in Virginia the best of their race, contributed not a little. One always felt the country had "a past." In fact, the educated Virginians were rather inclined to live in their past and dream, perhaps a little fancifully, of aristocratic old colonial days. They had mostly lived in the same neighbourhood and often in the same houses for generations and had an old-fashioned attachment to their surroundings and belongings, to their county, and, above all, to Virginia. They regarded themselves always as Virginians rather than as Americans. The better class spoke excellent English and had good voices, though the ladies had a soft, not unpleasant drawl. The other classes, lacking all refinement, had a strong vernacular, though different from that of the North or West, and with a touch of the negro dialect in it.

As for ourselves we enjoyed the life, though it was fairly strenuous and had its difficulties. Negro labour was troublesome to housewives, but far better than that entire absence of household help which made home life intolerable elsewhere in rural America. My wife was capable, resourceful and inventive, managed the negro servants well and was fortunate, too, in being untiringly susceptible to the lovely scenery among which our lives were cast, which all makes for content. The field labour was fairly satisfactory. Its hours were from sunrise till sunset, with a break for dinner. As the Ethiopian could not be trusted with the proper feeding of horses and stock, or with the key of the granaries or of coming up to time by his own volition, this entailed on the part of the master a daily familiarity with the sunrise at all times of the year which in that beautiful country I really

think in the long run easily repaid by its splendours the sometimes irksome duty. The lately freed negroes had not yet lost their manners, and if a little irritating and given to pilfering were at least entertaining. Their log cabins with gardens were sometimes situated near the house and known as "the quarters," and sometimes scattered about the plantation. They played the banjo and sang their old songs in the cabins and, "unaccompanied," shouted them behind plough or harrow. They seemed to us then such everyday matters it did not occur to us to transcribe or memorize them, just as the interminable war experiences of our neighbours seemed like things of the present, and had acquired as yet no historical interest. By the perversity of fancy, I was a great deal more interested in the field of Yorktown, or the trail of Braddock's fatal march, than in the yarns of living men who had so recently fought at Gettysburg or Manassas, to which there was no end.

The Virginia roads were and always had been vile beyond belief. It is only quite recently that macadam has been tentatively introduced into the oldest and once the greatest of American States. We never travelled on wheels unless compelled to. The saddle-horse was everything in that country and an important part of its daily life. Social interchange consisted very largely of short visits of a day or two, as the better class families were scattered rather widely apart. They were very enjoyable, though, these interludes. In a society where everyone lived on their own land and farmed it, there was the undying interest in all that concerns it for discussion. The Virginians were really good talkers. Besides the late war they were full of the old slavery days and good stories relating to that memorable epoch. They had a normal acquaintance with the ordinary English classics, and it is a well-known fact that Scott had so greatly influenced the previous generation as to account for much of the sentiment and backward-looking habit which characterized the educated Southerners of the time. Even their phraseology in print had contracted queer mannerisms and affectations which puzzled outsiders to

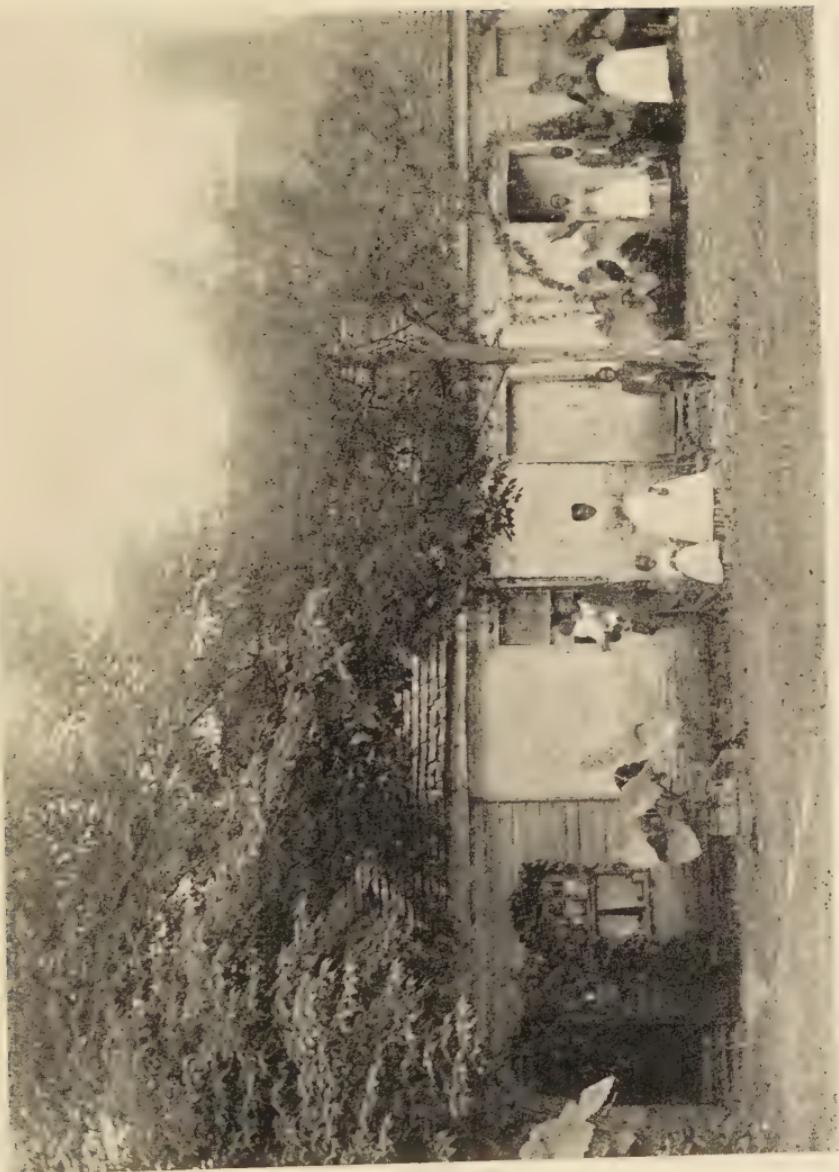
account for, but that are now attributed by their own social historians to the influence of Scott on a country reading public not well supplied with books and very susceptible to romance. By my time the cheap reprints of good English authors and the higher class American magazines and other books were everywhere available and brightened country life and intercourse.

Then there was sport, and the shooting was quite good. The Virginia partridge, so-called, otherwise the large American quail, was plentiful. It had the same domestic habits and gave much the same kind of sport as the English partridge, though the coveys were larger, while the amount of covert in the country made the use of pointers and setters imperative. There were wild turkeys, too, and the small American hare, often miscalled a rabbit, the "Brer Rabbit," by the way, of Uncle Remus, though as a matter of fact to the negro he was always an "ole har." There was also fox hunting, of the old slow hunting type. Several Virginians kept a few couple of foxhounds and hunted Reynard informally on their own account, hitting off the cold drag at sunrise. Cross-country riding in our sense was impossible over such a rough surface. It was not attempted. The hounds alone interested their owner, who jogged about as near them as he could, or betimes hit them off with the knowledge of much experience. This was an old sport in Virginia introduced from England in colonial days. Then again, there were trout in all the clear streams that tumbled down the woody valleys of the mountains, only fished for till our time with worms by the poor whites, the social pariahs of Virginia life, who led isolated lives in the mountain glens. I need not say I did not leave those streams near me long to the sole attention of these primitive, half-barbarous gentry. Later the fly was introduced on to the larger streams. The amazement of the mountaineers was one of the sporting humours of the day.

I contracted interests in due course mainly in connection with land and the inspection of properties which took me into many parts of Virginia and to the acquaintanceship of

a great many people outside our own region, and saved me from contracting ideas of the country drawn wholly from a single neighbourhood. Though the railroads often came in useful, most of these journeys were done on horseback with the old-fashioned saddlebags, and I much treasure the memory of these long rides through a country generally beautiful and also of much varied interest to me from other points of view. Sometimes I had an introduction to some gentleman's house (a mere formality in that hospitable country), or at others, for there were few inns, turned into an ordinary farmhouse for the night, where the owner was generally glad to see a respectable stranger, particularly an Englishman, as his curiosity was moved. And there would be talk on the porch, or by the big log fire, after supper on every conceivable subject under the sun (the Virginia sun) till my host would remember the inevitable call at daybreak to the Virginia farmer, and reluctantly show me up to my room.

Sometimes we made pleasure excursions in a party with the ladies on horseback over the Blue Ridge and across the beautiful and well-farmed Shenandoah valley, the land of the old Ulster Protestant, where Lee and Stonewall Jackson had both recently lived and there lay buried, to the main Alleghany mountains and their wild heart. I used to write in the evenings occasional articles for the *Field* or for *Forest and Stream*, the *Field of America*, then, under Hallock, doing great work for the encouragement of the right spirit in field sports in the United States. By degrees, from frequent contact with the past, and partly affected by a certain atmosphere of romance that assuredly does pervade Virginia, I got interested in its earlier history. It so happened that I used occasionally to find myself shooting over land in one district that had once belonged to Thomas Jefferson or in another to Patrick Henry. I used to meet, too, in ordinary life the grandsons and great-grandsons of other men who had signed the Declaration of Independence, or otherwise distinguished themselves, Randolphs, Nelsons, Masons, Bollings, the last, most notable descendants of



NEGRO "QUARTER" WITH HOUSE SERVANTS, VIRGINIA, 1875

Pocahontas, some of them actual neighbours. They were not antiquaries or students of history themselves, any of these good people, but just plain gentlemen farmers, which made their appeal in a way all the more effective.

Then occasionally I paid visits to friends in the North, in Philadelphia, New York or Boston, where everything seemed so neat, so luxurious, so cosmopolitan, compared with the simple life of Old Virginia. It seemed strange, too, being among Americans who knew personally all about England and Europe after living perpetually among people who, with all their virtues, knew absolutely nothing about the outer world except from books and hearsay. In some respects Virginia life bore resemblance to English country life among the smaller squires, minus the drinking, in the days of the early Georges. After a long course of it, a Boston dinner-party, by its contrast took one straight back to contemporary England with just a suggestion of Oxford. I was particularly fortunate in having old family friends there in the Woolcotts, whose forebears had been prominent in the affairs of both the State and the nation, and I was privileged to meet there both Wendell Holmes and Longfellow, and, what to me was almost more interesting, Francis Parkman, the distinguished historian and author of the many fascinating volumes on American colonial history and French Canada. For more than anything they first turned my attention seriously to those subjects which in after years, when I had opportunities to write, I felt most drawn to. We sometimes visited Canada, too, where we had many ties and connections, and I paid my first visit to Manitoba in 1884 when the C.P.R. had just reached it, and by that time I had several acquaintances settled there.

that In same year private reasons of no consequence here entailed our permanent return to England. Business ties, however, kept me in touch with matters on the other side which entailed revisitations at intervals for many years. I sold my property in Virginia in 1885, and though the return to old ties and old associations had, of course, strong attractions, it was with a real pang that we gave up our home in Old

Virginia. It was some years before I had leisure for literary work, other than the writing of occasional articles in the magazines and reviews. Towards the end of the century, however, I was free to write more seriously on the historical subjects that most appealed to me, work for which my past experiences provided a stimulating background and foundation. My youthful fondness for the hills and valleys of my own country, diverted by circumstances to other scenes, returned with renewed zest when once more among them. And when in due course free to wander more or less where I listed, my pen found further scope in recording for such readers as share my tastes or might be led to them, the pleasure they have afforded me.

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